

**CHECK LIST FOR ALDERMANIC SUBMISSIONS**

X	Cover Letter
X	Resolutions/ Orders/ Ordinances
X	Prior Notification Form
X	Fiscal Impact Statement - Should include comprehensive budget
X	Supporting Documentation
	Disk or E-mailed Cover letter & Order
	<b>IN ADDITION IF A GRANT:</b>
	Notice of Intent
	Grant Summary
	Executive Summary (not longer than 5 pages without an explanation)

**Date Submitted:** March 30, 2021

**Meeting Submitted For:** April 5, 2021

**Regular or Suspension Agenda:** Regular

**Submitted By:** Gwendolyn B. Williams

Resolution of the New Haven Board of Aldermen Authorizing the multi-year contract for Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership, Inc. (LEAP) not to Exceed \$100,000.00 to provide management for the Dixwell Community Center (Q-House). LEAP will manage programming and space management for the multi-generational facility in the Dixwell/Newhallville community.

**Comments:**

**Coordinator's Signature:**



**Controller's Signature (if grant):**

**Mayor's Office Signature:**

Call 946-7665 with any questions.

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE CLEARLY IF UC (UNANIMOUS CONSENT) IS REQUESTED\*\***



Justin Elicker | *Mayor*                      Gwendolyn B. Williams | *Director*  
**CITY OF NEW HAVEN YOUTH and RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

March 30, 2021

The Honorable Board of Aldermen  
City of New Haven  
165 Church Street  
New Haven, CT 06510

Re: Resolution of the New Haven Board of Aldermen Authorizing the multi-year contract for Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership, Inc. (LEAP) not to Exceed \$100,000.00 to provide management for the Dixwell Community Center (Q-House). LEAP will manage programming and space management for the multi-generational facility in the Dixwell/Newhallville community.

Dear Honorable Members:

Locally known as the Q House, the Dixwell Community Center has deep roots in the Dixwell Community. Built in 1924 at 98 Dixwell Avenue on land donated by Dixwell Congregational Church, this establishment has served local youth and has become a base for neighborhood groups, charities and other civic organizations. It has offered music, drama, and art classes; sponsored trips; and organized sports.

The new building that has been designed and almost completed will house Stetson Library, Elderly Services and Cornell Scott Hill Health Center. It will provide a gym, recording studio, meeting and conference areas, a kitchen and a basketball court with seating to cater to the interests of the community.

Having been selected by a rigorous procurement process by the City of New Haven and the Q House Advisory Board and the Q House Board of Directors, Leadership, Education and Athletics

165 Church Street · New Haven, CT 06510  
Phone: 203.946.7582 · Fax: 203.946.5750

in Partnership, Inc (LEAP) has been selected to be the management group for the Dixwell Community Center. LEAP is tasked with overseeing all program development and administration; direct the management of all staff, policy and procedures; directly supervise senior staff; a portion of fundraising for the programming; and establishing relationships with board members, community partners, collaborating organizations, and leaders in local and state government.

We are seeking to enter into a multi-year contract with Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership in order to establish fluidity and consistency in services provided. The maximum contract will amount to \$100,000.00 per year for the following fiscal years:

- 1) July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 (FY 22)
- 2) July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 (FY 23)
- 3) July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 (FY 24)

Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership is expected to be open through the week and some evenings and weekends. Additionally, LEAP is expected to operate in the Greater New Haven area and spend a significant amount of time immersed in the New Haven Community.

Sincerely,



Gwendolyn B. Williams, LMSW

Director

Youth and Recreations Department

Resolution of the New Haven Board of Aldermen Authorizing the multi-year contract for Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership, Inc. (LEAP) not to Exceed \$100,000.00 to provide management for the Dixwell Community Center (Q-House). LEAP will manage programming and space management for the multi-generational facility in the Dixwell/Newhallville community.

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WHEREAS, The Dixwell Community Center (Q House) was built in 1924 and has deep roots in the Dixwell Community becoming a base for neighborhood groups, charities and other civic organizations; and

WHEREAS, the City of New Haven recognizes that youth have limited resources and opportunities that may require services and mentors in order to support growth and reduce the risk for involvement in inappropriate behaviors; and

WHEREAS, Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership, Inc. has been selected via City of New Haven procurement process to be the managing organization of operations for the Dixwell Community Center (Q House); and

WHEREAS, the Youth and Recreation Department seeks to enter into a three (3) year multi-year contract with Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership, Inc in order to establish fluidity and consistency in services provided;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the New Haven Board of Aldermen:

1) The Youth and Recreation Department may contract with Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership Inc. for three (3) year contract for fiscal years 2021-2022; 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 for management of operations of the Dixwell Community Center (Q House); and

2) That the maximum contractual amount will not exceed \$100,000 per fiscal year; and

3) That the Youth and Recreation Department is authorized to execute an amendment to the agreement if such amendment to the Agreement is appropriate.

# **PRIOR NOTIFICATION FORM**

## **NOTICE OF MATTER TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN**

TO (list applicable aldermen/women): **The Board of Aldermen**

DATE: **March 30, 2021**

FROM: Department **Youth and Recreation Department**  
Person **Gwendolyn B. Williams** Telephone **946-5988**

This is to inform you that the following matter affecting your ward(s) will be submitted to the Board of Aldermen.

Resolution of the New Haven Board of Aldermen Authorizing the multi-year contract for Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership, Inc. (LEAP) not to Exceed \$100,000.00 to provide management for the Dixwell Community Center (Q-House). LEAP will manage programming and space management for the multi-generational facility in the Dixwell/Newhallville community.

Check one if this an appointment to a commission

☐ Democrat

☐ Republican

☐ Unaffiliated/Independent/Other

### **INSTRUCTIONS TO DEPARTMENTS**

1. Departments are responsible for sending this form to the alderperson(s) affected by the item.
2. This form must be sent (or delivered) directly to the alderperson(s) **before** it is submitted to the Legislative Services Office for the Board of Aldermen agenda.
3. The date entry must be completed with the date this form was sent the alderperson(s).
4. Copies to: alderperson(s); sponsoring department; attached to submission to Board of Aldermen.

## FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

DATE: March 30, 2021  
FROM (Dept.): Youth and Recreation Department  
CONTACT: Gwendolyn B. Williams PHONE 946-5988

### SUBMISSION ITEM (Title of Legislation):

Resolution of the New Haven Board of Aldermen Authorizing the multi-year contract for Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership, Inc. (LEAP) not to Exceed \$100,000.00 to provide management for the Dixwell Community Center (Q-House). LEAP will manage programming and space management for the multi-generational facility in the Dixwell/Newhallville community.

List Cost: Describe in as much detail as possible both personnel and non-personnel costs; general, capital or special funds; and source of funds currently budgeted for this purpose.

	GENERAL	SPECIAL	BOND	CAPITAL/LINE ITEM/DEPT/ACT/OBJ CODE
<b>A. Personnel</b>				
1. Initial start up	0	0	0	
2. One-time	0	0	0	
3. Annual	0	100,000.00	0	23102906
<b>B. Non-personnel</b>				
1. Initial start up	0	0	0	
2. One-time	0	0	0	
3. Annual	0	0	0	

List Revenues: Will this item result in any revenues for the City? If Yes, please list amount and type.

NO ☒  
YES ☐

1. One-time
2. Annual

Other Comments:



Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership, Inc. (LEAP)  
New Haven, CT

## **Q-House Launch and Management Proposal**

Submitted By:  
Henry Fernandez  
Executive Director  
LEAP

[hfernandez@leapforkids.org](mailto:hfernandez@leapforkids.org)

October 13, 2020

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Statement of Proposals	3
Management Approach	5
Respondent Profile, Staffing Plan, Team Resumes	15
Qualifications and Related Experience	19
Financial Information	24
Respondent's Representations and Warranties	25
Required City Forms	27
Fee Proposal	28
Appendix A: LEAP's Approach to Partnerships	29
Appendix B: Resumes of Key Staff	31
Appendix C: Audited Financial Statements	41





## Statement of Proposals

After thoroughly reviewing your RFP and considering your vision for the management of the Q-House, Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership, Inc. (LEAP) is excited to present this proposal and demonstrate that we have all the necessary qualifications to ensure the Q-House is a success. LEAP not only has experience in the key areas of program development, building management, human resource, partnership cultivation, and fundraising, we also benefit from deep roots in the New Haven community which we have served for over 28 years. As a candidate that shares your values and conducts similar work on a day-to-day basis, we are uniquely qualified to oversee the Q-House's exciting relaunch and establish for it a strong and lasting foundation.

LEAP is an education and youth development nonprofit that serves over 1000 young people in New Haven each year. Throughout our work, we address academic and social opportunity gaps by providing youth with access to the rich resources available in New Haven, creating a safe and community-based place for children to learn, explore and grow and for older youth to develop their strengths and talents as leaders. Through our multi-tier mentorship model, where teens and young adults of color are trained and supported in implementing programs for younger children, local youth ages 7 to 24 are able to access free, age-appropriate and culturally reflective enrichment located right in their own neighborhoods. Because of the collaborative approach that we bring to our work and the fundraising base that we have built, we are proud that LEAP's year-round programming serves and employs more young people than any other youth agency in New Haven.

LEAP's related experience begins with our own community center, a multi-purpose, space that has a pool, gym, weight room, dance studio, art room, community garden, teaching kitchen, playing field, library, teen lounge, and more. This space is one that we lease from the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven in a 30-year lease for a nominal fee (\$100 per year). Thus, we have a long history of working with New Haven government entities and local partners to successfully operate community center space.

While we are best known for working with young people, we also engage a range of adults in our programs, as both volunteers and as program recipients. For example, at our swimming pool, LEAP has classes for both adults and children. Similarly, hundreds of adults of all ages volunteer at LEAP annually doing everything from reading to young children at our Read-In on the New Haven Green to helping high school students craft effective essays when they apply to college.

Our work functions through countless partnerships with city agencies, nonprofits, locally-owned businesses, elected officials and the New Haven Public Schools. Our programming is made possible because of the unseen teams in our finance and development offices who manage a comprehensive system of financial controls and a robust fundraising strategy which has allowed us to grow our budget this year to \$3.1 million. This allows us to ensure that funds are responsibly managed and that programs are not only sustainable but growing. Our site-based programming will allow for Q-House staff and management to integrate easily into our model. As an organization that employs over 200 part-time staff members each year in addition to our 24-person full-time staff, we have the human resources infrastructure necessary to support this type of growth.

### *Board of Directors*

#### *Co - Chairs*

Ann Baker Pepe  
Ed Cleary

#### *Vice Chair*

Stephen Wizner

#### *Treasurer*

Susan Biel Kerley

#### *Secretary*

Cynthia Mann

#### *Co-Founder, Past Chair*

Roslyn Milstein Meyer  
Anne Tyler Calabresi

#### *Directors*

Sharon Brooks  
Marcus McFerren  
Tai Richardson  
Ken Russell  
Alexis Smith  
Clifton Watson

#### *Emeritus*

Honorable William Dyson  
Jerome Harris Meyer


#### *Executive Director*

Henry Fernandez

Our focus in managing the relaunch of the Q-House will be on communication and transparency. LEAP has established internal practices in place that have ensured our success in program development and financial management in the past. With the input and support of the Q-House Advisory Board, LEAP plans to immediately prioritize hiring, strategic planning, and budget development for the Q-House while capitalizing on our existing relationships and community presence to raise funds and generate publicity. Designated Q-House positions, such as a director and building manager, will be supported by our experienced and diverse staff, led by Executive Director Henry Fernandez who has an extensive background working in management, communication and strategic thinking capacities.

At the core of our work, LEAP deeply believes in the transformative power of community and has a commitment to empowering individuals to reach their full potential. As an organization, our decisions prioritize the best interests of the people we serve. Our leadership will establish the Q-House as a place by and for the community, where all New Haven residents are welcomed to receive necessary services, explore new opportunities, celebrate culture and legacy, and envision a hopeful future.

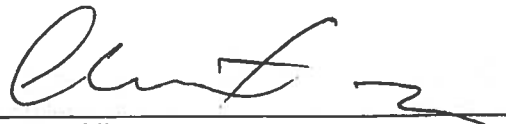
As Executive Director of Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership, Inc. (LEAP), I am authorized to bind the organization, and I am proud to submit this proposal on behalf of the organization.

  
Henry Fernandez  
Executive Director

State of Connecticut County  
of New Haven

On this the 12 day of October, 2020, before me, Albert Lee, the undersigned officer, personally appeared Henry Fernandez, known to me (or satisfactorily proven) to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged that he executed the same for the purposes therein contained.

In witness whereof I hereunto set my hand.

  
Notary Public

Date Commission Expires: 04/30/2024

ALBERT LEE  
NOTARY PUBLIC OF CONNECTICUT  
Commission # 178958  
My Commission Expires 4/30/2024



## **MANAGEMENT APPROACH**

### **Developing and Implementing the Q-House Mission and Strategy**

As a community institution that has served New Haven youth and families for over 28 years, LEAP is the ideal candidate to execute the vision of the Q-House as a “beacon of light for years to come.”

The Q-House is a place with strong cultural significance, and the mission of the new Q-House emphasizes a multi-purpose, multi-generational approach while still retaining its community legacy. LEAP’s proposed management strategy recognizes the Q-House’s long history in the Dixwell community while ensuring that it meets diverse community needs and remains financially sustainable. Over the past several decades, LEAP has operated in a similar role, managing and maintaining a 100-year old, city-owned community center that is a space for LEAP youth to come together and learn. Our community center houses a small library, gym, swimming pool, classrooms, dance studio, teen meeting space, computer learning center, art room, playing field, community garden, teaching kitchen and offices for staff, all of which are used on a regular basis. Although our primary programs involve youth, we conduct holistic programming that engages a variety of areas, from aquatics programs for adults to spearheading weekly convenings of New Haven youth-serving agencies during COVID-19.

### ***Strategic Plan***

LEAP is committed to developing a meaningful strategic plan and in fact currently is in a strategic planning process with its board and staff. For the Q-House, we would work closely with the Advisory Board to create short and long term plans that allow for the Q-House to achieve its mission. We will help raise funds for this purpose and integrate it into our development and management goals. Ideally, we would wait to begin this process until LEAP has been able to run the Q-House for enough time such that it can provide insights to the Advisory Board about what works, what opportunities exist, and where there are shortfalls. This will also allow the Advisory Board to come to know LEAP and our operational approach.

We envision an operational model which takes advantage of LEAP's existing management structure and ability to operate at scale. This will mean that LEAP does not need to replicate senior management, finance capacity, human resources, curriculum and program design functions, or our fundraising/development office. We would however expect to immediately hire a Q-House Director and a Building Manager. The Q-House Director will be available at the building every day and will be responsible for programs, staff oversight, and community engagement. The Building Manager will be responsible for the day to day operations of a large physical space from vendors to HVAC management to custodial services to security. We will supplement these positions by using our model of recruiting and training local high school and college students to provide direct services for young people and hiring local community members with expertise in areas like the arts, athletics, chess, wellness, and environmental education.

### ***Leadership Approach***

LEAP benefits from a close relationship with our Board of Directors, made up of 14 members who have a variety of areas of expertise and convene on a bi-monthly basis. Our Board of Directors simultaneously serves as LEAP’s advocates, fundraisers, and advisors. In advance of each Board meeting, LEAP senior staff prepare reports on all organizational activities, including updates on programs and our financial

position, which allows the Board to stay informed on our operations and gives them the opportunity to offer feedback and advice. LEAP plans to create a similar relationship with the Q-House Advisory Board on all Q-House-related activities. LEAP will report to the Advisory Board during bi-monthly meetings, with more frequent communication in the beginning as initial decisions are being made. We plan to look to the Advisory Board for input on issues such as budget, programs, and community outreach and publicity.

### ***Volunteer Participation***

LEAP believes that volunteers are integral to the work of a community-based nonprofit, and hosts our own volunteers at multiple points in time throughout the year. LEAP is well known and respected in the Greater New Haven community, which allows us to recruit volunteers of all ages (from students to seniors) and backgrounds (from artists to business leaders). We engage with hundreds of volunteers annually. We recruit volunteers from our community partners, New Haven Public School students, our donors, and the community at large, resulting in a diverse array of people who share a love for LEAP and a desire to make a difference. Our experience with volunteers has taught us that they are most effective when their roles are clearly defined. For example, LEAP hosts short-term volunteers for key events such as our annual Read-In on the New Haven Green, where volunteers read books to LEAP children; we also host longer term volunteers who work in our community garden and library and intern with our various departments. LEAP requires a background check for all of our volunteers (or anyone else who comes into contact with children) and trains them on working with young people. These are practices that we plan to bring to the Q-House, and we will work with the Advisory Board and the center's co-occupants to create innovative and useful volunteer positions that engage individuals of all backgrounds.

### ***Program Development and Implementation***

LEAP sees the Q-House's co-occupants—the Stetson Library, the Cornell Scott Hill Health Center, and the Dixwell-Newhallville Senior Center—as providing a unique opportunity to offer programs and services that do not exist elsewhere. LEAP has abundant experience working with a variety of partners and hosting flexible programs that can be adapted to different audiences. Furthermore, LEAP has already worked extensively with the New Haven Free Public Library to acquire library cards for all our youth and coordinate weekly visits to neighborhood branches during our summer programs.

Our leadership of the Q-House would ensure clear communication between all parties and full inclusion in decision-making processes through regular meetings with a designated contact person from each co-occupant. At the same time, we would want to capitalize on the synergy between all occupants and ensure that opportunities for collaboration are not missed. For example, LEAP's founding model is intergenerational and multi-tiered: many of our resource providers and employees for our children's program are LEAP alumni themselves, while our aquatics program is based on training young people to be swim instructors and lifeguards who teach both younger children and adults to swim. We see potential for activities between LEAP and the senior center, such as teaching seniors to swim at LEAP's pool or for LEAP teens to conduct service projects at the senior center. We would also work to ensure everyone who participates in any of LEAP's or the Q-House's co-occupants' programs has access to all the services offered by any of our organizations.

In our current operations, LEAP runs few income-generating programs as our focus is to ensure that activities are diverse and accessible to children of all economic backgrounds and low income families in particular. Other than our reduced-cost evening swim program that is open to children and adults, all of

LEAP's programs are entirely free and we are able to do this through an aggressive fundraising strategy that focuses on cultivating relationships with funders and donors. With the Q-House, our aim would be to expand LEAP's overall fundraising efforts to be able to offer an assortment of free and subsidized activities for community members, while taking advantage of the new space to host fundraising events once the pandemic has passed and it is safe to do so while collaborating with our co-occupants and the Advisory Board to raise additional funds.

LEAP will bring significant program development experience to the Q-House. We have an experienced set of staff members who develop programming now and we supplement this with a team of LEAP alumni (including New Haven school teachers) who serve as consultants to develop curriculum for our after school and summer programs. This allows us to develop programming which is supportive of what happens in school, recognizes children's social development needs at different ages, and is culturally sensitive in a city that is diverse. LEAP looks forward to collaborating with the programming committee of the Advisory Board to develop an array of program offerings that cater to the community the Q-House serves. LEAP hopes to gather input from the Board's programming committee on local partners who could provide activities, programs that have been successful at the Q-House in the past, and new activities or resources the community might like to see.

In our model, we regularly survey parents to understand the kinds of programming that they most want and need for their children. During COVID-19 this has allowed us to cater our programming in ways that recognize parents' work schedules, their concerns about mental health, and where their children need academic support. Based on a similar survey of community members about their needs and interests, we would work with local partners to offer a broad variety of enriching programs that would bring people from the broader community together at the Q-House.

### Outreach and Communications

#### ***Communications with Advisory Board***

LEAP has a strong relationship with our Board of Directors, with whom we meet on a bi-monthly basis. During each board meeting, each department manager at LEAP prepares a comprehensive report to the board on the areas they are responsible for, including budget, fundraising, program elements and partnerships. LEAP also regularly reaches out to our Board members to leverage their connections and for them to serve as advocates for us in the community. Our collaborative and supportive relationship with our board has allowed us to expand successfully over the last five years. We would bring a similar approach to our work with the Q-House Advisory Board, from whom we will look to for guidance on program development, potential partnerships, budget and developing an overall strategic plan. Meetings with the Advisory Board will take place bi-monthly, during which LEAP will report on all areas of operation at the Q-House. These regular meetings will also serve as an opportunity to receive valuable input from advisory board members on the Q-House's initial operations.

#### ***Publicity***

LEAP maintains regular communications with our donors, alumni, and community members. We communicate with over 3000 donors and community members through a quarterly newsletter, regular emails through Constant Contact, and social media on Facebook and Instagram. We communicate with families through regular texting and emails. Through these platforms we share stories about LEAPers, updates on our work, opportunities to get involved, and photos of our programs.

We also maintain a monthly press calendar and often receive coverage in local news sources including the New Haven Independent, New Haven Register, WNHH and WTNH. For example, during the summer of 2020, LEAP's programs were featured in three articles from three different New Haven news sources. We seek to keep LEAP in the news and in the public eye because this allows us to build funding support, increase volunteers, and build public support for our organization. Our executive director has been asked by WTNH to provide segments for parents on how to work with children during COVID and he was asked by the Community Foundation to speak with dozens of donors about the needs of youth agencies during COVID-19. Young people from LEAP joined a radio show on WNHH to talk about activism following the initial Black Lives Matter marches in New Haven. We are hosting in October a virtual meeting with our donors and community partners with former NBA star, former UConn Husky and social justice advocate Caron Butler to talk about his thoughts on criminal justice reform.

The relaunch of the Q-House and the many partners that it will engage provide excellent opportunities for press on which we plan to capitalize. These press opportunities and communications with our large audience will expand the reach of the Q-House and ensure that we serve as many community members as possible, while also introducing the Q-House to local donors, corporate sponsors, and potential volunteers.

#### ***Working with Community Groups, Elected Officials, and Collaborating Organizations***

LEAP has positive relationships with all members of the New Haven state legislative delegation, whom we work with annually to ensure support for LEAP in the state budget. Many of them volunteer for LEAP, especially during our annual Read-In on the Green that is well-known in the community. We also have positive working relationships with New Haven Board of Alders, who have also been enormously supportive of our organization. LEAP was, in the last few years, presented the New Haven Board of Alders' Black and Hispanic Caucus award for our work with New Haven children.

With our long history in New Haven, LEAP's strong relationships in New Haven have been visible during COVID-19. During the pandemic, we began a weekly convening of a coalition of youth agencies, led by our Executive Director Henry Fernandez, to discuss updates and strategies during the pandemic and raised funds for shared resources, including PPE equipment. LEAP also organized a petition to request government funding for student laptops and worked with City and State government to make it possible for youth summer programs to open safely. During these processes, LEAP leveraged our positive relationships with elected officials and city representatives, many of whom served as guest speakers during the weekly meetings with youth agencies.

In managing the Q-House, we will keep city officials informed and seek their support and input for both needs and opportunities. Historically, LEAP has maintained strong relationships with elected officials, with many volunteering to read with children at LEAP's annual Read-In on the Green and as Guests of Honor at our LEAP Year Event. Our staff have served as a resource for elected officials and other organizations and community leaders on issues related to youth policy. LEAP families and youth staff (college and high school students) regularly advocate on behalf of LEAP to state elected officials, testifying annually in the legislature, making phone calls and sending emails. As such, LEAP has managed to continue receiving state funding during a period of budget cuts. We would continue to use these relationships to benefit the Q-House.

#### ***Representing the Q-House***

Representing the Q-House on boards, committees, conferences, panel presentations, and other settings would be a role that the Q-House Director would take on, but also be the responsibility of LEAP's Executive Director and senior staff. Our staff members serve on the boards of local organizations like NeighborWorks New Horizons and the Greater New Haven Literacy Coalition, as well as national organizations like America's Voice. Staff also volunteer for a range of nonprofits. Together, our staff has experience in housing policy, public health, international education, economic development, and case management. Staff often attend and are invited to speak at community events hosted by other local organizations to speak on our expertise working with youth, and have a 28-year history of being featured in press, conferences and panels. We are experienced in representing LEAP to a variety of audiences, from funders and professionals to the general public, and even train our youth counselors to learn these skills. In most of our public events, we provide opportunities for our young people from New Haven to talk about their experiences.

### ***Collaborating with Non-Profits, Community Services, Public Education and Government Agencies***

As the largest youth organization in the city (in number of children served and youth employed), LEAP brings together a broad cross-section of the New Haven community, ranging from large, citywide departments to small community groups. Some of our larger partners include the New Haven Board of Education, NeighborWorks New Horizons, CT Transit, and Yale-affiliated institutions such as the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition and the Peabody Museum of Natural History. We work with large city departments to identify community needs and provide school sites for programming, summer counselor housing in the neighborhoods we serve, transportation between sites, and meals for our programs, all donated to LEAP free of charge by these partner institutions.

LEAP's smaller partners consist of dozens of new and long-term organizations and individual volunteers with special expertise in areas such as academics, arts, and athletics. Through these partners, many of which are local, LEAP children hike with the Appalachian Mountain Club, learn about food sustainability with the Garden Club of New Haven, create plays with the Elm Shakespeare Company, and do yoga with Zen Zilla Yoga. LEAP's extensive partnerships enable our students to experience broad enrichment and for those organizations to meet their goals of serving low-income youth from the broader community. Many of these partners have worked with us for years and some have personal connections to LEAP as former students, counselors or staff. See Appendix A for more details on our organizational partnerships.

At LEAP, these partnerships are managed by our Chief of Staff, who often oversees around a dozen partnerships at the same time. At the Q-House, partnerships would be supervised by the Q-House Director with support from our Chief of Staff. Nevertheless, they would follow the same principles that have made our current associations successful. Our partnerships rely on a base of mutual communication and planning to ensure expectations are clear on both sides. For example, to manage our long-term partnership with New Haven Public Schools, we ensure that communication occurs on all levels. Our Site Coordinators, who each operate a site at a New Haven Public School, work closely with the principals of their schools on a day-to-day basis, while our management team meets with principals each semester to ensure that everything is functioning smoothly. Our management team also maintains a relationship with the district on an administrative level to work out permits and permissions. Each of our partnerships begins with a planning conversation during which responsibilities and deliverables are established on both sides, followed by periodic check-ins throughout the duration of the partnership and a survey for program providers and debrief conversation at the end of each program component. For example, LEAP has had a five-year-long relationship with the Peabody Museum of Natural History to

run our annual Outdoor Corps program, where LEAP counselors and staff participate in classes offered by Peabody trained New Haven high school students and the take LEAP children on an overnight camping and hiking trip at a nearby state park to educate them in the natural sciences. LEAP and the Peabody worked together to establish goals and a curriculum, share educational spaces, train counselors, find funding, and debrief after the program concludes.

### Staff Relations

#### ***Personnel Recruitment, Employment and Release Plan***

LEAP's current recruitment strategy utilizes a diversity of methods that allow us to reach a large and diverse candidate pool. We post our open positions on leading online job search platforms, targeting those with experience in nonprofit settings, as well as on our website and through conducting significant outreach to community leaders who may have referrals. LEAP also recruits through our multi-tier mentorship pipeline, where LEAP children become Leaders in Training as teens and then counselors. In fact, all of our current full-time site coordinators were former LEAP counselors, and several members of our senior staff and board are as well. Candidates for positions at all levels submit applications and resumes and are interviewed by senior staff in our organization. Once a candidate is accepted, we conduct thorough background checks and they receive training on specific program needs as well as overall management. At the Q-House as in all of our programs, we would use these methods to ensure we hire qualified candidates who reflect our values and vision for the community center.

In terms of employment, LEAP is experienced in navigating a variety of staffing configurations. Each year we employ over 200 part-time staff members who work for us as counselors in addition to our 22-person full-time staff, and have the HR infrastructure to support a large number of employees. Q-House personnel such as a director and building management staff will be hired and specifically assigned to the site, with the exact positions to be determined in conversation with the Advisory Board and Q-House co-occupants. However, all personnel assigned to the Q-House will still operate under LEAP's staffing structure, with access to the same opportunities and obligations of LEAP employees. These include but are not limited to competitive compensation, health and other benefits, regular performance assessments, and inclusion in all-staff planning meetings, events and initiatives. Furthermore, all LEAP staff work in smaller teams or departments that offer a smaller supportive and collaborative environment, and have weekly team meetings and one-on-one meetings with their direct supervisors. Staff receive regular professional development throughout their employment as well.

LEAP follows all Connecticut state laws with regard to release. We conduct exit interviews with staff members who leave our organization for different reasons. When a position is vacated, LEAP pulls from our existing base of job descriptions to advertise the role; if a new position is necessary, we work with relevant staff members to develop a job description that is detailed and accurate.

#### ***Acknowledgement of Human Resources Obligations***

LEAP acknowledges our obligation to develop job descriptions, hold regular performance evaluations, implement sound human resource practices, train and supervise senior staff, and run staff meetings and staff projects. All of these are items that we practice on a regular basis and are overseen by our executive team and managers. Any Q-House staff hired by LEAP will be included in all of these practices.

#### ***Commitment to Developing and Supporting Staff***



Each member of our staff team is supported regardless of their seniority, with intensive training for our counselors and site coordinators, and the support of external consultants on program elements for our senior staff. As a result of COVID, LEAP has currently hired a part-time social worker to support staff's mental health and wellbeing needs, and our current budget includes an increase in full time staff by 3 people with specific obligations for staff development and training. Our senior staff has decades of experience both inside LEAP and in related relevant fields outside LEAP. Many members of our senior staff have been with LEAP for years—for example, our Chief of Staff joined LEAP as a junior counselor in 2006 and has been with us ever since—and mentoring and training others is built into their roles.

LEAP has a transparent management structure, and weekly team and one-on-one meetings between supervisors and employees allow for constant flow of feedback. Employees' voices are valued and they are encouraged to pursue new ideas or initiatives to grow as leaders or to help LEAP improve our work. LEAP also has regular staff morale sessions and fosters an inclusive workplace culture that many have described as a family.

### ***Recruiting and Retaining a Reflective and Diverse Staff***

LEAP has always participated in inclusive hiring practices and emphasizes the importance of developing leaders who come from the communities that we serve. LEAP is built on two ideas: (1) young people from low-income neighborhoods can be leaders, and (2) we all have a role to play in making our city and state better for children. These two ideas are reflected in LEAP's motto: "Creating A New Haven For Our Children." We recruit staff from a variety of sources, such as websites, neighborhood postings, local universities, and through networks of New Haven leaders. We also place an emphasis on promoting within our organization, especially in promoting our part-time youth counselors who come from the communities we serve into full time positions.

LEAP's staff has always been reflective of the communities that we work in, and we have incredibly diverse employees, volunteers and board members. We understand diversity as both broad in who it encompasses (including diversity in experience, class, and world view) and specific in that we do not shy away from ensuring diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, and LGBTQ status. We achieve this through how we recruit at all levels, how we train our staff and how we hold ourselves accountable. As an organization that focuses on developing young people to become leaders, LEAP has no shortage of young, local talent. Young people of color progress through LEAP and our alumni eventually become school principals, teachers, full-time LEAP staff and board members, both locally and nationally. We recruit college and high school student counselors from the range of colleges and public high schools in New Haven and many of our counselors were formerly LEAP children and/or teens. Our college students hail from a variety of institutions around the state and country and bring with them a diverse set of personal, community and academic experiences to their work with children. Moreover, we also prioritize diversity and inclusion in the types of partners we recruit – LEAP looks to partner with consultants, educators, artists and business owners who are African American and Latino. For example, our curriculum development and job training for our counselors this summer and fall is led by four experienced Black women educators, three of whom are former LEAPers themselves. By elevating diverse voices in positions of leadership and expertise, LEAP ensures that its culture is inclusive, culturally responsive and reflective of its surrounding community. We will bring these hiring practices and priorities to the Q-House. Ultimately, it is important to note that LEAP's staff is predominantly African American and Latino at all levels.

## **Budget and Finance**

### ***Developing and Maintaining Sound Financial Practices***

LEAP has a robust system of financial controls, both internal and external. The organization maintains a segregation of duties and adheres to GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures). Internal controls are closely monitored on several levels: the Finance Team, which consists of the Director of Finance and Financial Assistant, the Executive Director, the Treasurer of the Board of Directors, and the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors. All internal controls are monitored on a rolling basis. LEAP has an audit by an independent auditing firm. In years when LEAP's funding from the State of Connecticut exceeds \$300,000, it also has a state single audit. LEAP's audits have all been clean.

LEAP is committed to transparency in its finances and its IRS Form 990 and audited financial statements are both available on its website. It has received the Guidestar Platinum Seal of Transparency.

### ***Preparing and Adhering to a Budget***

To prepare and adhere to a budget for Q-House operations, LEAP will draw from our experience with the costs of operating programs and maintaining a building. LEAP's current process for planning our budget is collaborative between our Board of Directors, Executive Director and staff. We hold conversations with staff members to discuss changes to the budget. The Executive Director then presents a proposed budget to our board, followed by questions and discussion. Several of LEAP's Board members are also part of our Finance Committee, which includes the head of an accounting firm, a strategic financial advisor to Fortune 500 companies, and a lawyer. Financial statements are reviewed monthly by the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors for adherence to the organization's annual budget. There is a separate accounting of the organization's reserves that is also monitored monthly and as needed. Reports on our expenditures and budget are also given by the Director of Finance at board meetings every two months. The Finance Committee of the board also reviews the financial statements of the organization prior to every board meeting and reports to the full board at the regularly scheduled board meeting.

Similarly, with the Q-House, LEAP will present a proposed budget and our reasoning behind it to the Advisory Board prior to each fiscal year. This will be an opportunity to also discuss the program implications behind the numbers presented and describe how our budget aligns with our programmatic goals. Reporting opportunities during our bi-monthly Advisory Board meetings will explain how we are adhering to the budget throughout the year. Moreover, LEAP has a long history of running balanced budgets and meeting our budget goals in expenditures and fundraising. Our overall organizational budget is audited every year and we make these statements publicly available through our website.

### ***Ensuring Adequate Funds are Available***

LEAP's approach to ensuring that adequate funds are available is a combination of managing our budget and consistently pursuing fundraising opportunities. LEAP bases our budget around conversations with staff members and our previous experience in running programs and managing a building to guarantee that our projections are reasonable. When our budget is approved, LEAP's departments – programs, development, and finance – communicate to ensure that all expenses are covered and that funds are spent appropriately. Meanwhile, our development department solicits funding from a diverse portfolio of sources, including individual donors, private foundations, corporate foundations, and events. In an

emergency scenario, LEAP maintains reserves to sustain our programs until we are able to create a long-term solution. This has happened in the past when the state did not pass a budget until some 5 months after the start of their fiscal year, meaning that their resources were not available to youth agencies.

### ***Commitment to Jointly Conducting Official Correspondence***

LEAP commits to conducting official correspondence of the organization and executing legal documents jointly with the Q-House Advisory Board and our Board of Directors to the extent that this is legally allowed, organizationally appropriate and programmatically feasible. We make this distinction because there are documents like insurance contracts, employee agreements, vendor agreements, state contracts, auditor agreements, etc. which under state law must be completed by contracting parties who can legally bind an organization. We can work with the Advisory Board to identify those items where it would like input. But we do need to be able to run a nonprofit consistent with best practices, state regulations and contract law.

We operate transparently and honestly with all of our partners, and thus we want to be clear that if you hire us to manage the Q-House, we will do so transparently, but we will also need to do so in a way that maintains our ability to operate within the bounds of best business practices and the law.

### ***Fundraising Strategy***

Historically, LEAP has steered away from charging fees for our programs in order to ensure they are accessible to everyone, and especially to low income families. (We do have an evening swim program available to community members for a subsidized fee—though most of our swim programs are free and all of our other programs are free.) We have been able to sustain this ideal through a strong fundraising operation led by a development team of four full-time staff members, made up of a Director of Development, Development Coordinator, Database and Development Associate and Grant Writer. Over the past five years, our budget has grown by 82%, from \$1.7 million to \$3.1 million, allowing us to expand the population we serve, the services we provide and the staff we hire.

Our income is well-balanced, with 73% of our funds coming from individual contributions and events, 15% coming from private and corporate foundations and 12% coming from the government. We have many dedicated donors who have supported LEAP for a number of years and an innovative donor cultivation strategy with a renewed focus on developing relationships with new potential donors. LEAP also has a designated full-time grant writer and a robust grants management system that has brought in over \$700,000 in grant dollars this past fiscal year. Our relationships with funding bodies include private family foundations, community foundations, larger regional and national foundations and several corporations. We conduct continuous grant outreach and have applied to 16 new funding sources this past year. Finally, LEAP has also been successful in its events – in 2020, our primary annual fundraiser, LEAP Year Event, was attended by over 650 community members and raised over \$300,000 for LEAP programming.

Our longtime presence in the community has been an asset in the past for fundraising and advocacy, which we can bring to the Q-House. During COVID-19, a time when many nonprofits have been forced to close their doors, LEAP witnessed tremendous support from small donors, to college students, to established philanthropies. Our community of individual, foundation, and corporate donors increased their giving making it possible to run programs during the summer and continue to employ over 100 New Haven young people, despite increased safety and staffing costs. In addition to raising funds for our

programs, our development team was able to raise over \$100,000 to support community needs. We in turn gave our families funds for groceries, checks to landlords to support families who could not pay rent, and laptops so that children could participate in school and in LEAP's virtual programs.

We plan to work with the co-occupants of the building and the Q-House Advisory Board to continue to build relationships with funders, old and new, interested in seeing the community center thrive. In addition to all our existing efforts, we will expand to create fundraising strategies that specifically focus on the Q-House. There are a number of foundations, corporations and government entities that will be interested in supporting the Q-House and LEAP, as well as the unique collaborative that will be present involving the library, senior center, and health center. We will want to capitalize on that immediately to build strong donor support for programs at the Q-House when the building is the exciting new thing that everyone wants to support and see succeed. This should include a sponsored grand opening event.

In our experience, it is important to bring both donors and government officials to our programs to watch the excitement in action. This helps build their commitment to the programs and tells a much better story than we can tell just in a written grant application. Thus, dozens of donors tour LEAP every year, getting an opportunity to talk to children, teens, our partners and the young people who work for us. Building this personal connection is one of the key reasons why so many elected officials and donors stay connected to and supportive of LEAP for so many years.

## RESPONDENT PROFILE, STAFFING PLAN, TEAM RESUMES

### a) Organization Description and History

LEAP was founded in 1992 by leading educators, activists and parents in New Haven, who came together to address a shortage of opportunities for low-income young people of color. In our first year, we served around 225 children from Westville Manor, Church Street South, Elm Haven and Newhallville. In 1994, LEAP was formally incorporated as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit in Connecticut.

In 2015, the LEAP Board of Directors approached Henry Fernandez, one of LEAP's co-founders and its first Executive Director about returning to the role. Under Henry's leadership LEAP renovated its community center, reopened its pool, restarted its aquatics program and added a teaching community garden, computer learning center and new partnerships across the city. LEAP has grown its budget and number of children served significantly during this period. Our current fiscal year budget is \$3.1 million and we will serve about 1000 young people.

### b) LEAP Sites and Personnel

LEAP currently operates out of six sites, five of which are based at New Haven Public Schools. These include Roberto Clemente K-8, King/Robinson K-8, Fair Haven K-8, Clinton Avenue K-8, and Troup K-8. LEAP's sixth site is our community center at 31 Jefferson Street, for which we have just signed our second 30-year lease with the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven (which owns the property) for ten dollars a year.

Each of our school sites has a full-time site coordinator assigned to it as well as an assistant site coordinator and up to 20 college and high school student counselors. The site coordinators report to the Children's Program Manager. Our programs for young teens called Leaders in Training are overseen by our Youth Development Coordinator, who supervises up to 10 college student counselors. Our aquatics programs are run by a full-time Aquatics Coordinator who also supervises up to 10 youth swim instructors and lifeguards. All of our administrative staff, as well as site coordinators outside of program hours, operate out of our community center.

Our community center at 31 Jefferson Street is both our program home and our primary offices. At this location we operate a pool, gymnasium, dance studio, community garden, computer learning center, multiple classrooms, weight room, art studio, small library and dance studio. It also houses our offices for program, development, executive management, and finance staff.

### c) LEAP Availability in New Haven

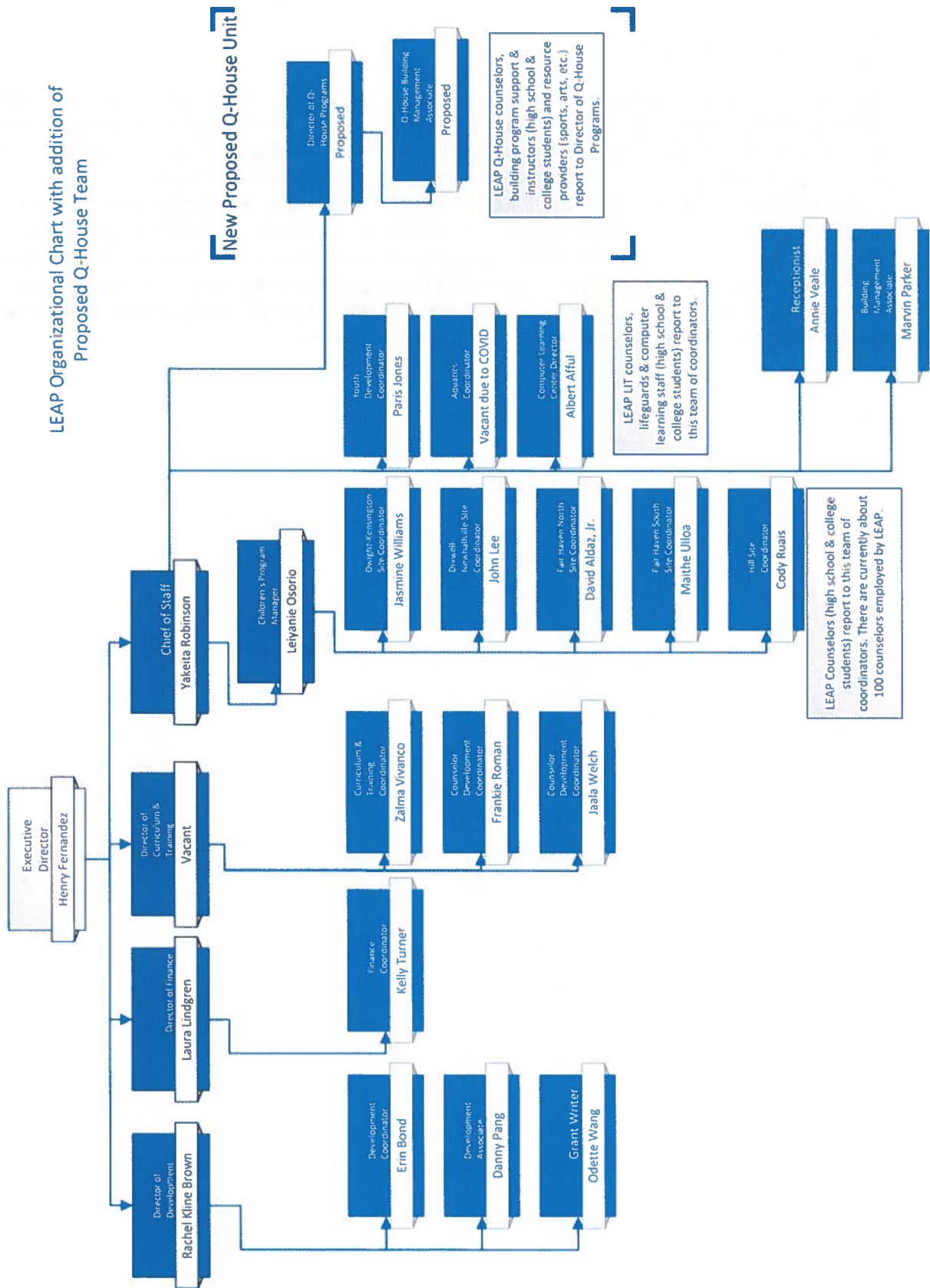
LEAP is located in New Haven full-time, and all staff reside in New Haven or in the Greater New Haven area. We currently operate in the Dixwell and Newhallville neighborhoods and our community center is less than a 10-minute drive from the Q-House.

### d) Proposed Staffing Team

The primary point of contact for the Q-House Advisory Board and the project lead will be our Executive Director, Henry Fernandez. Henry co-founded LEAP in 1992 and served as Executive Director from its founding year until 1997, returning to the position in 2015. He received a B.A. in Government from

Harvard University and is a graduate of Yale Law School. Prior to attending law school, Henry served as a community organizer and political advocate in various positions, including: the Human Rights Commission, Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, Committee to Elect Ken Reeves, and the Rural Organizing and Cultural Center. At Yale Law School, Henry served as a Stupski Public Interest Ventures Fellow, where he researched public education policy. Upon completing law school in 1998, Henry entered local government as the City of New Haven's Economic Development Administrator, overseeing seven city departments as well as directing the city's livable initiative that innovatively combined residential development, code enforcement, and neighborhood services. From 2006 to 2009, Henry pursued a political campaigning career, serving as the Campaign Manager of DeStefano for Connecticut and a member of the Obama-Biden transition team as a Department of Housing and Urban Development Associate. Since 2007, Henry has acted as a Senior Fellow at the Center of American Progress. He is also entering his sixteenth year as CEO of Fernandez Advisors, LLC, a consulting firm providing a range of management, legislative and administrative advocacy, advisory and project oversight services to a national client base. In addition to his role as LEAP's Executive Director, Henry is an active board member of Junta for Progressive Action and the National Hispanic Media Coalition, and is the chair of America's Voice's board.

Other key members of the staffing team include LEAP's Chief of Staff, Yakeita Robinson; Director of Development, Rachel Kline Brown, and Programs Manager, Leiyanie "Lee" Osorio, all of whom report to Henry. Our Chief of Staff manages partnerships and operations overall, our Director of Development oversees fundraising and our Programs Manager oversees the development and implementation of all of our programs. These members of our senior staff will manage the administrative aspects of the Q-House and work with the Advisory Board and designated Q-House staff to ensure its goals are being met. See Appendix B for staff resumes.



e) Impact on LEAP's Workload

LEAP has the internal capacity to take on management of the Q-House. If selected as the recipient of this contract, LEAP is prepared to work with our own Board of Directors and the Q-House Advisory Board to expand our staff and budget to accommodate for the new responsibilities that the contract entails. This would include adding Q-House-designated staff, including a Director and building management team, who would report to LEAP's Executive Director and chief of staff. However, we have enough capacity within our existing staff to manage the new staff that would be brought on and to manage the financial and fundraising aspects. Because of this flexibility in our staffing structure, we believe that the Q-House will fit well into our current operations and model as managing its components are in the purview of what we already do on a day-to-day basis. We would consider the Q-House to be an extension of our current work without large changes in the type of work that we do.



## QUALIFICATIONS AND RELATED EXPERIENCE

LEAP has been running our education and youth development nonprofit in New Haven for 28 years, currently serving over 1000 youth ages 7 to 24 annually. Our work on a day-to-day basis is multifaceted and involves many of the elements necessary to running the Q-House.

### Successful Similar Projects: Building Management

LEAP is experienced in building management, and specifically in management of community services buildings owned by public entities. Our community center building at 31 Jefferson Street in New Haven is owned by the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven (Elm City Communities). The partnership with the Housing Authority has been incredibly positive for both parties, as evidenced by the fact that the Housing Authority and LEAP just signed a new 30 year lease extension this summer. At the Jefferson Street facility, which is over 100 years old, LEAP manages all staffing, maintenance, security, and capital improvements. Since 1998 when LEAP first leased the building from the Housing Authority, we have made over \$750,000 in capital improvements, including installing a new roof, adding new HVAC rooftop units, removing asbestos, replacing windows, renovating classrooms and rebuilding the pool, heating and physical infrastructure. The City, through leadership from the Board of Alders, has graciously contributed about \$250,000 to these costs, while LEAP has raised the rest or gotten services donated from construction unions and companies.

Our team currently includes full-time maintenance and reception staff, which are supplemented by part time staff and contractors for building and grounds management. Our Executive Director has broad experience in building management, having built out the property management functions for the Livable City Initiative (when he was its director) and more broadly for City when he was Economic Development Administrator. In these roles, he negotiated leases, hired contractors, negotiated with construction unions, and led the city's efforts on redevelopment including with Ikea, the Homes at Monterrey, Florence Virtue, and Gateway Community College. In 1997, while at LEAP, he led the effort working with the City and the Housing Authority for LEAP to acquire and renovate the then-vacant property at 31 Jefferson Street, and then led funding and renovations efforts for the building in 2015 when he returned to LEAP.

We understand how to program community space. LEAP's current community center includes a gym, pool, weight room, computer learning center, teaching kitchen, arts and crafts space, teen meeting space, library, community garden, outdoor playing field, work offices and classrooms. LEAP children come to our community center as part of their regular programming to utilize the wide variety of resources. LEAP teens are based out of the community center, and LEAP counselors are trained there. It is a space that is open and welcome to all ages. We are uniquely experienced in managing a large multipurpose space while also running programs at multiple locations.

### Successful Similar Projects: Program Development and Implementation

LEAP runs programs at six sites in New Haven, five of which are located at New Haven Public Schools (though currently we are using community spaces like churches because the schools are not open). We work closely with the school district to use these sites free of charge and to identify students who may be in need of our programs. LEAP's youth program addresses a range of needs through our comprehensive offering of activities. During the academic year, LEAP runs afterschool programs where children receive homework help, engage in enrichment activities such as swimming and dance, receive

free meals, and go on field trips. During the summer, LEAP runs an all-day camp with a focus on literacy and enrichment. Our summer camp also includes community service opportunities, overnight outdoor wilderness camping in state parks and natural sciences trips to local parks, and visits to different cities such as Philadelphia and Washington D.C. We have strong components on African American and Latino history working with partners like the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition.

The New Haven high school and college student counselors who lead these activities are both LEAP employees and program recipients. Thus, in addition to paying New Haven teens and young adults, we provide college access programming, SAT classes, tutoring on various school subjects, and professional development. LEAP provides college tours for high school students, and assistance with the college and scholarship applications processes. LEAP also distributes around \$13,000 in named scholarships each year funded by donors.

Our staff is well-trained and experienced in managing a packed agenda of programs, liaising with multiple partners at once, coordinating logistics for several different sites, and communicating with families and community members. We value transparency and community input in our program planning—our programs staff members have individual relationships with our families and youth, and we frequently survey and interview all of our participants, including our children and their parents as well as our counselors and Leaders in Training to better understand their experiences and needs.

Moreover, in LEAP's Aquatics Program, we offer free swimming classes and sessions year-round to all enrolled children and teens and extend these classes to the New Haven community (including children and adults) for a very low cost. Our reduced-cost swim program for both children and adults runs year-round—classes start every 6 weeks and run for 5 weeks, meeting twice a week for 45 minutes each. In the summer of 2019, 92 children and adults were enrolled in LEAP's evening community swim program. During the full 2018-2019 year, LEAP served 457 children and adults in all of our aquatics programs, and have experience adapting our curriculum and instruction to different ages. (Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 and current state regulations, we are not operating our swimming pool and will not do so again until we can do so safely.)

#### Strong Leadership and Administration

LEAP has a strong leadership and administrative team. Our Executive Director, Henry Fernandez, is highly qualified to head the relaunch of the Q-House. He serves as the face of our organization and has a strong range of experience in program/staff management, working with Boards of Directors, strategic planning and public communication as well as deep familiarity with the City of New Haven. Henry co-founded LEAP in 1992 and served as its first Executive Director from 1992 to 1998. In 2015, LEAP's Board of Directors approached him about returning to the organization to reorient its work, increase its fundraising capacity and strengthen its community position.

Outside of LEAP, he is a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress in Washington, D.C., where his work focuses on civil rights, technology, and immigration. He is also the CEO of consulting firm Fernandez Advisors, LLC, and serves as chair of the board of the national social justice organization America's Voice. He has previously served on numerous boards around the country. In Connecticut, he has served on the boards of Junta for Progressive Action, the Tweed Airport Authority, Connecticut Voices for Children, Market New Haven and the Connecticut Commission on Arts, Culture and Tourism. In the past, he has worked as a community organizer and served as a member of the Obama-Biden

transition team. Henry brings significant communications experience, having served as a commentator for MSNBC, and having been interviewed by media ranging from the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Fox News and USA Today to all of Connecticut's television news stations as well as the New Haven Register and New Haven Independent. He has built and managed large scale communications and advocacy projects for national organizations including the NAACP, Amnesty International and the Center for Community Change. He is a graduate of Yale Law School and Harvard College.

The Q-House startup would also be supported by our senior management team, including Yakeita Robinson, our Chief of Staff, Leiyanie "Lee" Osorio, our Children's Program Manager, and Rachel Kline Brown, our Director of Development. In addition to a range of supervisory responsibilities, Yakeita (who started at LEAP when she was a teenager and now has a daughter in college who graduated from Amistad High) manages large scale program logistics for LEAP. She manages our relationships with the New Haven Public Schools (handling space requests), the City of New Haven (for summer youth employment programs), resource providers (community members who provide arts, athletics, and other skills enriching programs), and institutional partners like the Peabody Museum of Natural History and Yale Art Gallery. Yakeita is a graduate of Albertus Magnus College who grew up in New Haven and Bridgeport.

Lee Osorio oversees all of our children's programming. She grew up in New Haven and is a graduate of New Haven Public Schools with Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from Albertus Magnus College. Lee first came to LEAP as a student and has served as a counselor and site coordinator, prior to her current role which she has held for several years. Lee oversees our children's programs in all neighborhoods, supervising the site coordinators who in turn manage our close to 100 counselors. She is jointly responsible with our counselor development staff for the recruitment, training and professional development of the young people who work for us.

Rachel Kline Brown has served as LEAP's Director of Development for four years. In this role she and her team have raised the amount donated to LEAP from \$1.7 million to \$3.1 million annually, while bolstering reserves. She has built a strong team of employees and volunteers with specialties in grant writing, donor/database management, direct mail and fundraising events. In addition to her skills as a fundraiser, she brings significant experience in youth programming, having served as a schoolteacher, trainer of teachers, and nonprofit director. She is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her three children attend New Haven Public Schools.

In combination, our staff has strong experience and skills in fundraising and donor relations, interpersonal and communication skills, planning and program design, and working with boards, stakeholders and partners. They know New Haven well and have strong relationships that they will leverage on behalf of the Q-House.

### Integrity

LEAP is well-known for its transparency and integrity in its leadership and across its organization. We regularly self-evaluate and make program changes when needed. We encourage feedback from across the organization and are honest about what is working and what needs improvement. Our policy with our board of directors is that we over-communicate to them, letting them know well in advance if we think there will be important or difficult decisions forthcoming. We regularly share our curriculum and training strategies with other New Haven youth agencies and this past summer we raised and regranted funds specifically to support other youth agencies that needed PPE to safely operate their programs. We

do this because it is our belief that New Haven children need a range of opportunities and that New Haven needs more strong youth agencies.

LEAP's central approach is to make decisions based on what is in the best interest of children. We find that this brings a level of ethics and integrity to all decisions that we make. We apply this approach across the board from our hiring decisions to our program design to our budgeting and fundraising.

#### Strong and Transparent Financial Management Capacity

LEAP is committed to financial transparency with our board, stakeholders, donors, and the broader public. LEAP has been awarded the highest Platinum Seal of Transparency from the nonprofit reporting agency Guidestar for our financial transparency and operations. We make our audited financial statements and IRS Form 990s available on our website for all to view.

We maintain strict financial controls, including separation of duties, an annual audit, and a manual of financial controls. We use GAAP rules and standards. We close and reconcile our books monthly with the Executive Director and the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors reviewing that closing and reconciliation every month. The Finance Committee of the board must approve the opening of any new accounts or significant variances to the budget. All payments are approved in writing first by a manager, then their supervisor and finally by the Executive Director. Our payroll is managed through ADP with each employee having a portal that allows review of their own payroll information.

LEAP completes an annual audit. Our auditors are Marcum LLP Accountants, a national CPA firm with a large New Haven office. When LEAP's revenues from the state exceed \$300,000, LEAP also completes a State Single Audit, which it has done each of the last 5 fiscal years.

LEAP's budget is developed by the Executive Director in consultation with the Director of Finance and the other members of LEAP's executive team. This is presented in draft form first to the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors and then to the full Board at regular meeting of the board. The Executive Director and Director of Finance review the budget with the Board and identify any changes that they may want. At the next regular Board meeting, the Board votes on a final version of the budget for the fiscal year. The Executive Director and the Director of Finance review the prior closed month's financial statements of the organization with the Finance Committee prior to each full board meeting and then present those to the full board as well.

#### Work Ethic and Commitment to the Q-House

Part of LEAP's culture is a commitment to hard work on behalf of the young people of New Haven. The best recent example of this may be LEAP's ability to operate at scale during COVID-19 this past summer. For 28 years, LEAP has run summer programs indoors in New Haven public schools with groups of 10 children and 2 counselors. In early June we finally received guidance from the State of Connecticut about what would need to be done to run in-person summer camps.

Program size was initially limited to 30 kids by the state, and no group of children could be larger than 8 children. Over the course of 30 days, we completely redesigned our programming. We worked with the state so that we could operate programs for up to 350 children and teens across multiple sites around the city. We purchased tents so that we could operate outside. We scoured the country to find masks (for children and staff) and cleaning supplies. We wrote new rules for how children would enter camp

(with temperature checks, fully masked and following an interview of their parent about any symptoms they or others in their household might have). We trained counselors on safety rules. We worked with the Board of Education to set up our tents in school playfields. We worked out a system for weekly COVID-19 testing of all staff. We created a combination hybrid virtual and in-person program that served hundreds of children and teens and employed 120 college and high school students.

All of this was done by working long days and weekends. A commitment that was demonstrated across our staff. It allowed us over the course of 4 weeks to get a program up and running, one that was heralded by parents and young people in our post-camp surveys.

We will bring that kind of commitment to the Q-House. Our goal is to make the Q-House be a shining example in our city and nationally for what is possible for young people. We want to celebrate the hard work that the Advisory Board has put in over years to make the Q-House dream a reality by producing programs that transform opportunities for young people and creating an anchor for families and people of all ages at the Q-House.

Finally, we are committed to the Q-House for a very personal reason. One of LEAP's co-founders was Regina Winters. Regina was a brilliant architect and deeply committed New Havener who was the original architect for the Q-House before she died far too young. It would be an honor to share the light and joy that we know that she brought to the Q-House vision.

### References

#### **Reference #1**

Name: Dr. Joseph H. Johnson  
 Title: Principal  
 Organization: King/Robinson Interdistrict  
 Magnet School  
 Telephone Number: 475.220.2700  
 Fax Number: 475.220.2777  
 Address: 150 Fournier St, New Haven, CT 06511  
 Email Address: [joseph.johnson@new-haven.k12.ct.us](mailto:joseph.johnson@new-haven.k12.ct.us)

#### **Reference #2**

Name: John Jessen  
 Title: City Librarian and Director  
 Organization: New Haven Free Public Library  
 Telephone Number: 203.946.8124  
 Address: 133 Elm St, New Haven, CT 06511  
 Email Address: [jjessen@nhfpl.org](mailto:jjessen@nhfpl.org)

#### **Reference #3**

Name: Shefau Dabre-Rufus  
 Title: Founder & Owner  
 Organization: Zen Zilla Yoga and Wellness, LLC  
 Telephone Number: 203.850.7054  
 Address: 216 Crown St, 4th Floor New Haven, CT 06510  
 Email Address: [shefau.dabre@gmail.com](mailto:shefau.dabre@gmail.com)

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

LEAP is classified as a 501(c)3, approved by the IRS as a tax-exempt, charitable organization. We are an independent nonprofit with a budget that has ranged from \$2.1 million to \$3.1 million over the last three years. We employ 22 full-time staff members and 200 part-time staff members, most of whom are high school and college students who serve as youth program counselors. Our Board consists of 14 members and our Executive Director. See Appendix C for our audited financial statements for the past three (3) fiscal years.

**NOTICE OF INTENT**

**NOTIFICATION TO THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN REGARDING PROPOSED GRANT  
AND CONTRACT APPLICATIONS TO BE MADE BY THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN  
DURING THE PERIOD:**

**March 30, 2021**

**PROGRAM NAME: Dixwell Community Center (Q House)**

**(X ) NEW                      (   ) CONTINUATION  
(Check One of the Above)**

**FUNDING LEVEL AVAILABLE TO PROJECT:    \$300,000.00**

**FUNDING SOURCE:                      City of New Haven**

**PURPOSE OF PROGRAM:** To enter into a 3 year multi-year contract for the management of the Dixwell Community Center (Q-House)

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF CITY'S PROPOSAL:**

Resolution of the New Haven Board of Aldermen Authorizing the multi-year contract for Leadership, Education and Athletics in Partnership, Inc. (LEAP) not to Exceed \$100,000.00 to provide management for the Dixwell Community Center (Q-House). LEAP will manage programming and space management for the multi-generational facility in the Dixwell/Newhallville community.

**MATCH REQUIREMENT FROM GENERAL FUND (if any): None**

**ALLOWABLE INDIRECT COST: None**

**DEPARTMENT SUBMITTING APPLICATION:    Youth and Recreation Department**

**CONTACT PERSON: Gwendolyn B. Williams**

**DATE: March 30, 2021**