

# Application for Funding – Cover Page

## Applicant Agency

Business Name	Mountain-Plains Youth Services Coalition (dba Youthworks)	Street Address Including City, State, and ZIP Code	1330 18th Avenue South Fargo, ND 58103
Contact Person	Kim Ekart	Title	Grants Manager
Phone	701-390-8200	Email	kekart@youthworksnd.org
Authorized Representative	Melanie Heitkamp	Title	Executive Director
Phone	701-255-6909	Email	mheitkamp@youthworksnd.org
Federal Employer Tax Id #	46-0345922	Unique Entity Identifier #	KCSJVSNHZZL5
Dates of Active Registration in System for Award Management			02/17/2024

Total Amount of Funding Request \$63,079.12

Evidenced-Based Services (Y/N) Yes

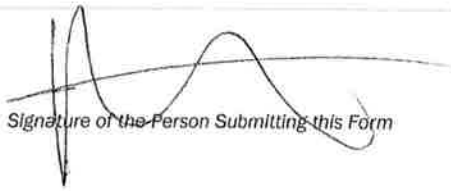
Name and Source of Evidenced-Based Services Youth Participatory Action Research

Geographic Area to be Served Cass County

Estimated Number of Youth to be Served 30

Estimated Number of Minority Youth to be Served 27

Signature

  
Signature of the Person Submitting this Form

Name Kim Ekart

Name of the Person Submitting this Form (print)

Date of Signature 09/14/2023

## **YOUTHWORKS' YOUTH AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT NARRATIVE – Increasing Connection for Fargo's Youth**

**Description of the Project:** Youthworks is seeking funding to implement an innovative prevention program for minority youth in the Fargo/Moorhead Area. Youthworks recognize that the proposed project is smaller in scale than the breadth of potential services proposed in the Request for Proposal. However, as an agency that has worked to address disproportionate minority contact within systems for decades, Youthworks is acutely aware that alternative programming should be explored. This proposal heavily emphasizes the planning phase, inclusive of BIPOC youth voice, and provides a small scale program as a pilot approach for addressing the needs of minority youth in the state. While Youthworks is the applicant on this proposal, the preponderance of funding is budgeted to be subawarded to the Beyond the Game program which will be its own 501(c)3 in January 2024.

Beyond the Game (BTG) is a Black-led, multi-faceted community-based program for youth ages 11-18 that focuses on health and wellness, youth advocacy, youth development, and athletic performance. Through a trauma-informed, healing-centered, and holistic approach, BTG has been able to reduce youth violence and justice-involvement among Black male youth in the FM Area. Of the 27 youth who participated in BTG in 2021, only one was involved in the juvenile justice system a year into the program. This rate of justice involvement (3.7%) is nearly three times lower than the average Black male in the FM Area.

*Description of the Issues and Previous Efforts:* BIPOC youth are overrepresented in ND across a myriad of issues, including homelessness, human trafficking, victimization, suspension/expulsion, child welfare involvement, and juvenile justice involvement. An article entitled “Violence-Related Disparities Experienced by Black Youth and Young Adults: Opportunities for Prevention” published by the American Journal of Preventative Medicine studied four independent data sets for youth and adults. It examined rates of homicide, assault, injury from a physical fight, bullying victimization, and missing school due to safety concerns and determined Black adolescents are at a substantially higher risk of experiencing the most physically harmful forms violence. When considering Black justice-involved youth in the FM Area, this overrepresentation is significant. According to a 2020 report conducted by the ND Association of Counties, in Cass County, 11.18% of Black youth received a juvenile citation in 2017, compared to only 2.6% of their white counterparts. Further, Black youth in Cass County were seven (7) times more likely to be committed to secure facilities than White youth.

### **Project Planning, Design, and Implementation:**

*Planning Phase, Collaborations, and Outreach:* Youthworks and BTG, will utilize the first three months of the grant period to work alongside BIPOC youth in exploring the strengths, capabilities, barriers, and needs of BIPOC youth and families in the community. This planning phase will provide a greater understanding for the state of North Dakota regarding ways in which to address disproportionate minority contact. Youthworks believes that youth voice, family voice, and community partners' voices are critical to the implementation of meaningful change within the community. Listening sessions will be held in community neighborhoods and the outcome of these listening sessions will be guided by the participants.

Additionally, Youthworks and BTG will convene a larger stakeholder meeting to assess the need, barriers, and collaborative goals. Additional stakeholders include Cass County Human Service Zone, Fargo and West Fargo Public Schools, Southeast Human Service Center, and other local cultural organizations such as the Indigenous Association, and Kaleidoscope.

*Services:*

Youthworks is seeking additional funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for BTG. If fully funded, BTG will utilize a three-tiered approach that includes: 1) Community Outreach and Engagement; 2) Youth Engagement; and 3) Youth Leadership and Empowerment.

**Tier One – Community Outreach and Engagement:** This tier focuses on the macro-level work that supports a responsive system, community buy-in, and enriched community dialogue regarding the needs of BIPOC youth and families. BTG believes that youth healing occurs in the communities from which youth come and hopes to use funding through this proposal to enhance the community conversation around the narrative of BIPOC youth violence. The BTG Team Lead will be responsible for engaging with community stakeholders, including youth, families, and credible messengers within the community to develop listening sessions that will be co-facilitated by program youth. These listening sessions will occur quarterly and will be held in spaces that are comfortable for community members. BTG staff will actively work to engage in meaningful partnerships with local youth and families to ensure their voices are represented. Together, this community partnership will determine next steps which could include advocacy for policy change, the development of community events, or advocacy for funding, among other ideas.

**Tier Two – Youth Engagement:** This tier prioritizes relationship-building activities and low barrier support for youth through the Beyond the Game (BTG) program.

*Team Sports and Competition:* On the surface, BTG is a program centered around the game of basketball. Program youth attend practice regularly, with a middle school and high school team. Practices, which are located at a community-based church gymnasium, are held throughout the week during out-of-school time hours. While families are invited to attend practices, nearly all program participants require transportation to and from practices which BTG provides. It is not uncommon for high school youth to arrive at the gym during the middle school practice and remain at the program until 9 or 10pm.

When looking beyond the surface (or Beyond the Game), BTG is a program that promotes prosocial skills, teamwork, leadership, and excellence. The BTG Team Lead co-creates a space alongside program youth that is healing-centered. By recognizing the impact trauma has had on communities of color, BTG utilizes the coaching relationship to support youth resiliency and healing through physical and mental exercise. While the physical exercise is obvious for a program about basketball, the mental exercise is less so. In BTG, program youth are challenged to redefine leadership in sports, in the peer group, and in their communities. Program youth who are able to demonstrate personal growth and engagement with the larger community are invited to participate on BTG's AAU team – an opportunity few would otherwise have.

*After-school Homework Assistance:* To promote youth's overall success, BTG offers "hallway tutoring" for youth before and after practices. This informal model allows youth to engage in

academic support without the pressures of formal tutoring. It has been BTG's experience that youth who were initially disengaged from school have gained the desire for academic success over time, as they received support through the BTG program. While not formally measured, BTG program staff report that the majority (60%) of BTG youth did not believe college was attainable prior to being in BTG. These beliefs were due to a lack of attendance at school, low grades, a lack of guidance on the college application process, and a lack of adult role models who had attended college. After being a part of BTG, approximately two-thirds of youth envision their future to include college. To date, three BTG youth have been offered full-ride scholarships to the colleges of their choice, with many others making the decision to attend post-secondary institutions.

*Health and Wellness:* BTG holds monthly Health and Wellness seminars that explore the holistic elements of a person's wellness. Included in these conversations are discussions about community wellness and social justice impacts on a person's overall well-being. Program staff and youth explore these impacts with local health and wellness presenters, who volunteer their time to the program each month. Themes from these monthly Health and Wellness seminars are then incorporated into team practices and other elements of BTG programming. To further promote wellness, all program youth have access to an online portal that focuses on nutritional health and mental health. Youth enrolled in the portal have weekly coaching sessions aimed at supporting their overall wellness. Finally, to further promote the concept of holistic wellness in sports, BTG and the Fargo Police Department are planning ND's first ever Mental Health and Wellness Tournament which will be held in fall of 2023. This tournament will consist of six teams and will feature mental health and wellness breakouts for teams to attend when they are not playing.

*Social-Emotional Support and Community Referrals:* The BTG Social Worker attends every workshop and practice and is often the one giving rides, helping with homework, or ensuring youth have their basic needs met. Through developing relationships that are based on mutual regard, the BTG Social Worker can connect with youth and assess their world outside of basketball. While the program is not meant for "troubled" youth, 75% of program youth reported underlying issues in the community with law enforcement, at school for attendance and behaviors, or with their families due to conflict or abuse within the home. Having the social worker on site allows program youth to have an immediate outlet to assist them with any challenges they may be experiencing in the week. Oftentimes these conversations result in further connections for the youth, with the social worker making community referrals when a youth is ready.

*Peer Mentoring/Coaching:* It is not uncommon for program participants to say they want to become social workers or coaches after participating in BTG. They see themselves in the program leaders and want to provide that for others. Recognizing that program youth are leaders, BTG enlists the high school participants to coach and provide peer mentorship support to the middle school youth. Currently, this is a voluntary experience; however, BTG would like to pay youth peer mentors and coaches for their time. If funded, this proposal would allow BTG to do so.

### **Tier Three – Youth Leadership and Empowerment:**

*Social Justice and Leadership Opportunities:* Program youth are required to engage in at least four social justice/community events a year. Examples include Missing and Murdered Indigenous People's Day, Juneteenth, Pride, and local resource fairs. Prior to engaging with these events, the

BTG team explores the history behind the event, the knowledge BTG youth and adults have about the history, and a plan for how the BTG youth and adults can grow from attending the event. While attending these social justice/community events has been a part of BTG since its inception, the practice of acknowledging the impact of marginalized populations' histories is one of the recommended best practices in anti-racist violence prevention practices cited earlier (2023). Program youth have also volunteered in the community doing things like painting the basketball courts in the Arbors neighborhood, creating the upcoming Beyond the Tournament donation basketball tournament, and volunteering for YW's annual youth clothing giveaway, "We've Got You Covered."

*Beyond the Dimensions:* Youth in BTG have created a podcast, Beyond the Dimensions, to share their expertise and perspectives on issues that relate to youth. These podcasts are engineered and edited by program youth with the help of a community volunteer and are posted to YouTube as a way of promoting youth voice. Some examples of Beyond the Dimensions podcasts include an interview with a Fargo Police Officer and Mental Health Specialist, a dialogue about whether men being emotional is healthy, and a conversation with female teens about gender perspectives. While the majority of their videos explore pertinent youth issues, others explore oceans, spy balloons and, of course, basketball.

***Youthworks' Supportive Services:*** BTG youth will have access to the full gamut of services provided at Youthworks, with BTG serving as a gatekeeper. Programs include: the runaway program and Short Term Care and Assessment Center, homeless youth programming, Bridges suspension/expulsion program, victim of crime programming and others.

*Screening Tools:* BTG does not currently use formal screening tools, but is prepared to implement the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) in its assessment. The DAP is a social-emotional assessment which measures the internal strengths and external supports of young people and can track their growth in these key areas over time. The DAP was created by the Search Institute, the leading organization for Positive Youth Development research and best practices.

*Other Sources of Funding:* Youthworks' Basic Center/Runaway Program (BCP) and Short Term Care and Assessment Center (STCAC) are fully funded supplemental programs to this project. Youthworks provides the only BCP programs in North Dakota for runaway youth, providing up to 21 days of shelter to youth who have been kicked out of their homes, are experiencing homelessness, or who have runaway. BCP is a federal Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) funded project. The STCAC receives funding from local law enforcement entities, federal Attendant Care funding, and from tribal communities. The STCAC was certified with the State of North Dakota in 2022, but the agency pivoted away from being a certified shelter due to several restrictions at the time. Youthworks is considering becoming certified for CHINS youth, which would result in additional supportive funding.

**Timeline:** The timeline for this proposal is attached on a separate document.

**Evidence-Based Practices and Promising Practices when working with BIPOC youth -- Priority Consideration:** Emerging youth development research promotes the utilization of Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) in working with marginalized populations. YPAR engages youth as equitable partners, building from their expertise and strengths in developing

comprehensive solutions to promote personal development and systems change. A 2023 YPAR research article explored anti-racist violence prevention among Black youth, with youth participants identifying two key anti-racist interventions: 1) promoting Black history knowledge and 2) nurturing mentoring relationships (Jaeger, et. al. (2023). *Anti-Racist Violence Prevention: Partnering with black youth to identify intervention strategies. Health Promotion Practices, March 2023, Vol. 24 (2), pp. 223-231*). Both of these recommended interventions are currently being utilized by BTG and will continue to be incorporated in the program. Youth and families who have experienced marginalization and system oppression are oftentimes weary of contacting law enforcement, social services, or the courts. It is Youthworks' experience that youth will engage with community-based services more readily than they will with services that remind them of "the system." BTG has been a critical program for BIPOC youth in the FM Area, as many of these youth would not otherwise engage with services. However, over time, several BTG youth have been willing to sign themselves into Youthworks' STCAC, participate in therapy, and receive additional supports from other providers. Once connected, Youthworks will work with the youth and family to promote strong relationships and connections throughout the community, including to other culturally-specific organizations.

**Capabilities and Competencies:** In 2022, underwent a guided strategic planning process that evaluated the mission and vision of the agency. This process was conducted with youth and staff feedback while taking community perspectives into consideration. Whereas Youthworks' former mission was specific to certain populations or experiences (runaway, homeless, trafficked, and struggling youth), its new mission is inclusive of all youth, recognizing that our communities will thrive when every youth has a safe place to belong and be heard. This funding opportunity perfectly aligns with Youthworks' 2023-2026 Strategic Plan that prioritizes enhancing prevention supports for youth in North Dakota.

**Grant management experience:** Youthworks has provided services to youth in North Dakota since 1986. Youthworks is an experienced provider of runaway, homeless, outreach, emergency shelter, anti-trafficking, and juvenile diversion programs, with more than 40 current funding sources. In total, YW's staff has managed more than 200 major projects funded by state and federal agencies, foundations, and other private sources. Lead management staff have more than 100 years of combined experience in grant services and management. YW has provided youth diversion and prevention services since 2008, including Diversion, the Youth Cultural Achievement Program, and an OJJDP-funded mentoring program.

**Fiscal accountability:** Youthworks maintains a 24-page Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual that is in accordance with federal guidelines. The FPPM outlines the accounting functions of the organization and details all **policies, procedures** and **governance** pertaining to accounting functions, as adopted by the Board of Directors. Youthworks has managed many millions of dollars from federal grants. Youthworks' Board of Directors adopt an annual budget and approve updates on a quarterly basis. The board receives a financial report at each meeting and the board's Internal Operations Committee provides oversight of fiscal issues. The agency has a cost allocation plan that is reviewed annually by an external audit firm to ensure compliance with federal cost allocation principles. Youthworks as an annual A-133 audit with no audit exceptions or findings and undergoes site reviews conducted by state and federal agencies to ensure fiscal accountability.

*Roles and Responsibilities:* The following staff have roles within the project, with several staff supporting the oversight and/or administrative functions of the project.

**BTG:** Included in this proposal is a Letter of Intent from BTG's founder, J'Neil Gibson. Youthworks will work alongside BTG to establish an MOU regarding roles and responsibilities under this proposal.

**Melanie Heitkamp, Executive Director:** Ms. Heitkamp, LCSW, has been with the agency since 1987. In her role as Executive Director, she provides oversight of the agency, its operations, and its general management. Ms. Heitkamp will act as intermediary between Youthworks and BTG as the non-profit launches in 2024 and Ms. Heitkamp will facilitate the listening sessions with stakeholders alongside BTG.

**Jeanette Gravseth, Chief Financial Officer:** Ms. Gravseth has been with the agency since 1997 and provides fiscal oversight of the agency.

**Kim Ekart, Grants Manager:** Ms. Ekart, LMSW, works in conjunction with Youthworks' leadership team and program staff to ensure compliance of grant awards. Ms. Ekart will work alongside the subgrantee to ensure compliance with performance data and grant expectations.

**Plan for Collecting Performance Data and How it will be used for Continuous Quality Improvement:** Youthworks will work with BTG to track and monitor Performance measurements, including: the number of youth and families served, referral source, length of involvement, services provided, number of youth served by an evidence-based program or promising practice, number and percent of youth receiving culturally specific services, number and percent of youth with successful completion from programming with no systems involvement, number and percent of families satisfied with services, and number and percent of youth with improved family relationships. The number of youth that offend/re-offend will be documented at 3 months, 6 months and 9 months of programming. The number of MOU/stakeholder agreements will be tracked by the BTG program, with those documents kept in a grants file.

*How Data will be Collected:* Youthworks and BTG will collaborate on grant reporting documentation, with Youthworks' Grants Manager supporting this task. The Grant Manager monitors data entry on an ongoing basis, providing targeted and specific feedback regarding inputs, activities/outputs, and outcome measures.

**Goals, Objectives, and Activities:** The overarching goal of this proposal is to prevent systems involvement by offering an alternative pathway for youth and families to seek support and services, with an emphasis on difficult-to reach BIPOC youth. Central to the goals, objectives, and activities will be meaningful collaborative conversations with BIPOC youth, families, and community stakeholders about the specific needs of BIPOC youth to address the continued disproportionate representation of BIPOC youth within systems. BTG envisions these conversations being led by youth, with the support of the adults in the program.

Goal 1: Community Engagement: Youthworks' BTG program will provide community engagement to BIPOC youth (ages 11- 17) that have been underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by inequality by engaging youth where they live and socialize.

Objectives:

- Increase community knowledge about the resources available when a youth or family is in crisis (including Youthworks, community-based services, 211, Mobile Crisis Unit, law enforcement, hospitals, etc).
- Increase youth's knowledge of and access to services.

Activities:

- Develop and implement listening session model with stakeholders (youth, families, community providers)
- Based on listening sessions, develop MOUs with subaward partners
- Outreach to places where youth and families congregate, building connections and relationships
- Host four events annually that are attended by 30 BTG youth, located in either high crime areas (the Arbors) or in youth's schools to promote youth engagement and leadership where risky behaviors and crime are more likely to occur.

Deliverables: Data Sets, outreach, survey

Goal 2: Youth Engagement: Connect BIPOC youth (ages 11- 17) that have been underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by inequality to preventative services.

Objectives:

- Increase youth/family's involvement with cultural and community connections
- BTG will engage 30 youth in BTG practice, BTG community service, and BTG community events throughout the calendar year.

Of the 30, 73% will participate in at least one activity/week.

and

27% will engage in mental health support.

Further, 50% will participate in at least one group to support their emotional health.

Deliverables: Data Sets



## Beyond the Game Timeline

Project Goal	Related Objective	Activity	Expected Completion Date	Person Responsible
Subaward funds to BTG non-profit	BTG will be an established non-profit with the state of North Dakota	Develop contract and MOU between BTG and Youthworks for formal subaward	End of Quarter 1	Melanie Heitkamp and J'Neil Gibson
Goal 1: BTG program will provide community engagement to Black youth (ages 11-17) that have been underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by inequality by engaging youth where they live and socialize.	Increase community knowledge about the resources available when a youth or family is in crisis (including Youthworks, community-based services, 211, Mobile Crisis Unit, law enforcement, hospitals, etc).	Develop and implement listening session model with stakeholders (youth, families, community providers)	Quarter 1	Melanie Heitkamp and J'Neil Gibson
		Based on listening sessions, develop MOUs with subaward partners	Quarter 1	Melanie Heitkamp and J'Neil Gibson
	Increase youth's knowledge of and access to services.	Outreach to places where youth and families congregate, building connections and relationships	Ongoing	J'Neil Gibson and BTG team
		Host four events annually that are attended	Ongoing	J'Neil Gibson and BTG team
Goal 2: Connect Black youth (ages 11-17) that have been underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by inequality to preventative services.	Increase youth/family's involvement with cultural and community connections	Track # of referrals to cultural and community connections, including to Youthworks and other community supports	Ongoing	J'Neil Gibson and BTG team
	BTG will engage 30 youth in BTG practice, BTG community service, and BTG community events throughout the calendar year.	BTG will engage 30 youth in BTG practice, BTG community service, and BTG community events throughout the calendar year.	Ongoing	J'Neil Gibson and BTG team
		Of the 30, 73% will participate in at least one activity/week. 27% will engage in mental health support. Further, 50% will participate in at least one group to support their emotional health.	Ongoing	J'Neil Gibson and BTG team

# Budget Summary

**Applicant:** Mountain-Plains Youth Services Coalition (d.b.a. ')

**Project Period:** 10/1/2023 --- 09/30/2025

	Grant Request	Match	Total
Budget Categories:			
Personnel	9,688.24	-	9,688.24
Fringe Benefits	3,390.88	-	3,390.88
Travel	-	-	-
Supplies	-	-	-
Subaward/Contractual	50,000.00	-	50,000.00
Other Direct Costs	-	-	-
Indirect Costs	-	-	-
Total Grant Funds	63,079.12	-	63,079.12

# Budget Detail Worksheet and Narrative

**Applicant:** Mountain-Plains Youth Services Coalition (d.b.a. Youthworks) Fargo

**Project Period:** 10/1/2023 --- 09/30/2025

Personnel				Total Grant Period		
Position	Name	Annual Salary	Grant Allocation %			
				Grant Request	Match	Total
Executive Director	Melanie Heitkamp	\$109,180.00	3.00%	\$6,551		\$6,551
Chief Financial Officer	Jeanette Gravseth	\$86,872.00	1.00%	\$1,737		\$1,737
Grants Manager	Kim Ekart	\$70,000.00	1.00%	\$1,400		\$1,400
Total Personnel Costs				\$9,688	\$0	\$9,688

**Personnel Narrative:**

Melanie Heitkamp, LCSW, provide oversight of the agency, and will oversee the community listening session process alongside BTG's Leadership. Ms. Heitkamp is included at 3% FTE. Youthworks Chief Financial Officer, Jeanette Gravseth, who provides fiscal oversight of the agency, is included at 1% FTE. Kim Ekart, LMSW, acts as the agency Grants Manager and will help ensure grant compliance of the subawardee. She is included at 1% of her annual salary.

Fringe Benefits				Total Grant Period		
Position	Name	Annual Benefits	Grant Allocation %			
				Grant Request	Match	Total
Executive Director	Melanie Heitkamp	\$1,146	4.00%	\$2,293		\$2,293
Chief Financial Officer	Jeanette Gravseth	\$304	1.00%	\$608		\$608
Grants Manager	Kim Ekart	\$245	1.00%	\$490		\$490
Total Fringe Benefits				\$3,391	\$0	\$3,391

**Fringe Benefits Narrative:**

Fringe benefits for full-time staff include: Social Security (7.65%), Unemployment Insurance (1.85%), Worker's Compensation (3%), Health Insurance(15.5%), and Retirement (7%). Thus, fringe benefits are calculated at 35% of salary.

Travel			Total Grant Period		
Purpose	Location	Expense Type (Hotel/Mileage/Per Diem)	Grant Request	Match	Total
Total Travel Costs			\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Travel Costs Narrative:</i> There are no travel costs for this proposal.					

Supplies			Total Grant Period		
Item	Quantity	Per Unit Cost	Grant Request	Match	Total
Total Supply Costs			\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Supply Costs Narrative:</i> There are no supply costs for this proposal.					

Subawards/Contracts		Total Grant Period		
Description/Purpose	Computation	Grant Request	Match	Total
Subaward for Beyond the Game	\$25,000 annually	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000
Total Subaward/Contractual Costs		\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000
<b>Subaward/Contractual Costs Narrative:</b> Beyond the Game (BTG) is a community-based program that promotes Black youth's development, leadership, and identity. For the past two years, BTG has been hosted by Youthworks, but in 2024 BTG will be its own non-profit organization led by Black leaders in the community. Youthworks' proposal includes a \$50,000 subaward for BTG.				

Other Direct Costs		Total Grant Period		
Type	Computation	Grant Request	Match	Total
Total Other Direct Costs		\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Other Direct Costs Narrative:</b> There are no direct costs for this proposal.				

Indirect Costs			Total Grant Period		
Description	Base	Rate	Grant Request	Match	Total
					\$0
Total Indirect Costs			\$0	\$0	\$0
Indirect Cost Narrative:					

LETTERS  
OF  
SUPPORT

Beyond the Game  
4357 13<sup>th</sup> Ave S  
Fargo, ND 58103

September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

North Dakota Association of Counties  
P.O. Box 877  
1661 Capitol Way  
Bismarck, ND 58502

Dear NDJJSAG Grant Committee Members:

We are submitting this letter with the purpose of indicating our role as a partner as a sub grantee for the SAG grant if awarded to Youthworks. Beyond the Game has operated as a prevention program under the umbrella of Youthworks for two years. Beyond the Game has sought to reduce incarceration & juvenile justice involvement through developing relationship, promoting meaningful connections & self-worth. This has been done by providing youth cost free opportunities to engage in skill building activities, sporting activities, therapeutic interventions, transportation, case management & mentorship.

We are aware the intent of the SAG grant is to support agencies & programs that seek to assist in reducing incarceration and out-of-home placement through community-based alternatives; and reduce juvenile justice system involvement through positive youth development opportunities, with a focus on minority youth. We feel our involvement and continued partnership with Youthworks is a perfect model to fulfil expected service requirements. BTG programs operate primarily in the late afternoon's & evenings. Youth participate in specific programming five afternoons & evenings a week, with two of those evenings taking place on weekend. BTG provides transportation, mentorship, & culturally appropriate programming. Ninety percent of BTG's leadership identifies as BIPOC, this is done to ensure minority populations participating in BTG see & hear leaders that relate to themselves. This also is very impactful providing youth credible messengers in their lives. Youthworks provides immense wrap around services for youth participating in BTG. Wrap around services include, 24/7 emergency shelter service, Family engagement counseling services, Youth screening & Family engagement.

If Youthworks is awarded the SAG grant by the NDJJSAG grant committee, BTG & Youthworks will continue to work together to provide impactful services & fulfil the distinct purposes of the grant. BTG expects to be a stand alone 501 C3 recognized by the state January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. Following this transition, we envision even more cohesiveness, with professionals, community partners & our youth population with this familiar partnership. This letter of intention is not an official contract. Youthworks & BTG will continue to frame the parameters of this partnership, with the hopes of growing more opportunities for BIPOC youth.

Best regards,

J'Neil Gibson, Beyond the Game





Director of Juvenile Court  
[kkringlie@ndcourts.gov](mailto:kkringlie@ndcourts.gov)

Brian Washburn, Court Officer III  
Jamestown / Valley City Region  
[bwashburn@ndcourts.gov](mailto:bwashburn@ndcourts.gov)

Nicole Leitner, Court Officer III  
Fargo / Wahpeton Region  
[nleitner@ndcourts.gov](mailto:nleitner@ndcourts.gov)

## STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA JUVENILE COURT

**Fargo Office**  
1010 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South  
Fargo, ND 58103  
(701)451-6980

Angie Wamre  
James Grimley  
Dawn Peters  
Brad Saville  
Saddi Fontaine  
Cassie McCamy  
Chad Fischer  
Kaitlen Engen  
Ryan Chisholm  
Jim Pender

September 15, 2023

**RE: BEYOND THE GAME (BTG) / Youthworks  
ND State Juvenile Justice State Advisory Group Grant Application**

Dear NDJJSAG Grant Committee Members:

I was thrilled to learn that Beyond the Game (BTG) was applying for a State Juvenile Justice Advisory grant to support the valuable work of this program.

Beyond The Game was created by J'Neil Gibson, within the program offerings of Youthworks, as way to involve youth in a positive activity that not just occupies their time and energy, but teaches and models the importance of relationship building in our community. What this program gets right, in my opinion, is making central the fact that people and their relationships with each other are critical to both personal growth and community safety.

The program is run by credible messengers who are passionate about youth and informed in the science of what makes an effective delinquency prevention program. The behavioral science is not obvious to the kids. What is obvious is that the program leaders really care about them and are willing to be a consistent positive force in their lives, even when things get tough.

North Dakota Juvenile Court has been partnering with Youthworks for many years in this region to address the needs of youth at-risk to be involved in juvenile justice in our region. During the two-year time period that Youthworks had the court contract to deliver a Youth Cultural Liaison Program (YCAP), I had the opportunity to work with J'Neil and see his passion for this topic as well as his connection to youth. In my experience in local juvenile justice meetings, J'Neil is consistently the most passionate, thoughtful, and collaborative professional in the room. I know that this passion also extends to the collection and analysis of racial and ethnic disparity data and can guarantee that if

SAG Grant Letter  
September 15, 2023  
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awarded this grant, he will do a great job of collecting and reporting any required data.

This community is fortunate to have Beyond The Game, a quality program which integrates social connections and social skills learning in an athletic setting for minority youth. Please support this valuable work and consider thoughtfully their request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Karen Kringlie".

Karen Kringlie, JD  
Director of Juvenile Court Services  
East Central and Southeast Judicial Districts