

## Ash Institute Summer Fellowship in Urban Policy Project Description | 2009

### Louisville Metro Government, Louisville, Kentucky “System for Youth Development”

Background and Context: In 2003, Louisville merged city and county governments becoming the 16<sup>th</sup> largest city in the nation ([www.louisvilleky.gov](http://www.louisvilleky.gov)). As part of a community look at competitive factors, *increasing educational attainment* became one of three “deep drivers” goals. The Greater Louisville Project (GLP) is charged with advancing and tracking progress on the goals and its website ([www.greaterlouisvilleproject.org](http://www.greaterlouisvilleproject.org)) contains current data and reports, including several commissioned from the Brookings Institution and a recent Education Pipeline graphic.

The project proposed for the Ash Fellow supports GLP’s ambitious education goal to increase the number of high school graduates and the number of people with GEDs, technical certificates, Associate and Bachelor’s Degrees. To help achieve this goal, the recent *Graduate! Greater Louisville: High School Dropout Solutions Summit* ([www.louisvilleky.gov/oyd/dropout\\_summit](http://www.louisvilleky.gov/oyd/dropout_summit)), hosted last summer by the mayor and superintendent of schools in partnership with America’s Promise ([www.Americaspromise.org](http://www.Americaspromise.org)), proposed creating a community-wide “**System for Youth Development.**” Student supports – the positive influencers that wrap around young people and help students “make it through” – are as important, or in some cases more important, than what happens in school.

Project Description: The Louisville Metro Office of Policy and Management (OP&M is part of the Mayor’s Office) proposes to work with an Ash Fellow in the Summer of 2009 and through the following academic year on policy and data analysis and strategic planning for a proposed **System for Youth Development.** The Wallace Foundation has published findings on creating such systems in [A Place to Grow and Learn](#). We have been inspired by the initiatives in Providence, RI (*Providence After School Alliance* – funded by Wallace) and Washington, DC (*DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation*). Greg Roberts, who led DC’s program and is the new director of Louisville’s Muhammad Ali Center, has agreed to serve as a resource.

The goal for Louisville is “to create a sustainable, community-wide system for young people that provides a vision for youth, raises professionalism of the youth services field, attracts resources and engages the business community.” The visioning process will be well underway by summer, as will consultant-lead work, such as:

- Mapping youth development services (database of services already exists, need geo-mapping)
- Working with partner agency to conduct market survey of teens and parents, include transportation needs
- Assembling, synthesizing and analyzing data
- Assessing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and gaps
- Proposing a framework for quality standards, coordination and shared accountability

Expected Product: The Fellow will support the work underway and help in the development of *A Blueprint for Youth*, which will include: Common vision, strategies and indicators for youth development; Business plan for systemic approach or youth services network; Quality standards, organizational structures for community system; and Measures and data systems that inform funding decisions.

Work Environment: The fellow would work as a staff member in the Mayor’s Office, Louisville Metro Hall, 527 West Jefferson, Suite 200 under the supervision of Mary Gwen Wheeler, Director OP&M. The fellow will be housed in the suite with OP&M staff with his or her own office space, computer, and materials, and also will work closely with staff from the Metro Office of Youth Development (OYD). OYD ([www.louisvilleky.gov/oyd](http://www.louisvilleky.gov/oyd)) offers: direct service programming (e.g., educational, social and after-school programs, life skills training); provides funding for, researches and evaluates youth-based programs and services; and maintains listings of youth services and resources. We have hosted high level interns and fellows in the past and look forward to the new ideas and excitement a new individual would bring. We look forward to an experience tailored toward the completion of a capstone project.

Collaborative Partners: In addition to Metro staff, the Ash Fellow will have the opportunity to work with senior staff representatives from an Advisory Team formed to lead the visioning and system development work outlined in our Dropout Solutions Plan. Members include staff from Metro United Way, the organization taking the lead in developing a community vision for youth, Jefferson County Public Schools, serving 100,000 students and one of the nation’s largest public districts, and numerous community, business and youth-serving organizations – as well as youth themselves.