Harlem Commonwealth Council
Arches: A Transformative Mentoring Intervention  RFA PIN: 78112ARCHESRFA
Program Application – Narrative

A. ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCE

1. Organization History and Mission – Harlem Commonwealth Council, Inc. (HCC) is an independent 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the economic health of Harlem and its vibrant, multi-cultural community. The Harlem Commonwealth Council creates independence and stability in Harlem through economic development, academic empowerment and entrepreneurial support. Founded in the 1960’s as an economic development vehicle, HCC has been a prime mover in Central Harlem. Over the decades, the concept of economic development has been broadened to include economic stability for the individual, addressing the lack of educational skills and opportunities, the lack of funding for our entrepreneurs, and the special educational and language needs of our growing immigrant population. Today, Harlem Commonwealth Council’s focus is to invest in people who live and work in Harlem by providing them with educational and professional career growth opportunities that will serve the community.

2. Organization Service Population – The Harlem Commonwealth Council serves the increasingly diverse greater Harlem community with a range of programs developed in response to emergent needs. In addition to providing business instruction to adults in Harlem interested in starting a business and providing Harlem-based small business owners with the funds necessary to expand or start a business, HCC serves the general population in our community with computer training for adults, including Seniors; neighborhood elementary school age children through our Think and Create! after school program; area high school juniors and seniors with paid HCC summer internships; Harlem youth, ages 14-24, with summer employment; the growing immigrant population in the community (particularly West African, Haitian and Latino) with English as a Second Language (ESL) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) leading to a GED
certificate, and students enrolled in practical and registered nursing, radiology, physician assistant and pre-med training programs at Harlem Hospital and a list of community and professional colleges in New York City.

3. **Senior Leadership – Dr. Joseph L. Tait, President and CEO** - Prior to his appointment as President/CEO in 2005, Dr. Tait was Chairman of Planning Board 9, Member of the Board of the Manhattan Borough President’s Office, and a long-standing Director of the Commonwealth Holding Company and Board Member and Chairman of the Harlem Commonwealth Council. With a long and distinguished career in veterinary medicine, Dr. Tail was the first black veterinarian appointed to, and later Chairman of the New York State Board for Veterinary Medicine, former Chief Veterinarian of the Berg Memorial Institute of the New York University Medical Center, and Vice President of the ASPCA in charge of Veterinary Affairs. Under Dr. Tait’s leadership, HCC’s program and budget have doubled in size.

**Reverend Maurice D. Winley - Arches Project Coordinator** - Reverend Maurice Winley will be joining the staff of HCC and will be Project Coordinator of the Arches Mentoring program, *Minister of the Billy Roberts House of Hope* and Board Member of Harlem Young Life, Reverend Winley is also Director of Youth Ministries for one of Harlem's most respected churches with a nearly 50 year presence in Central Harlem, Soul Saving Station for Every Nation Christ Crusaders of America (located at the corner of 124th Street and Frederick Douglas Boulevard). An ex-offender himself, Reverend Winley is very much a “credible messenger.” He brings to HCC and the Arches Program more than a decade of experience in *Positive Youth Development* training and practice, working with troubled youth and young adults. Since 2006, Reverend Winley has been Chaplain and Director of Positive Youth Development at St. Christopher’s, Inc. (established in 1881). At St. Christopher’s, Reverend Winley developed a
groundbreaking Positive Youth Development program serving mostly New York City adolescents of color, ages 14-21, from low income communities who have been placed in Residential Special Education. Reverend Winley also brings years of direct mentoring experience, having initiated a Rights of Passage pilot initiative at the Frederick Douglas Academy in Harlem and continuing to engage with them on a per project basis since 2001. Since 2009, he has also been a Facilitator with the re-entry project for incarcerated youth at the Robert N. Davoran Center on Rikers Island where he has been instrumental in the Urban Eagle Initiative, a character development program. Reverend Winley’s training includes a Certificate from the DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative, a national training program empowering leaders who work with disadvantaged youth; completion of the Advancing Youth Development Curriculum for Training Youth Workers from the Cornell Cooperative Extension, and training in youth mentoring from Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the Christian Association for Youth Mentoring. Reverend Winley is a Board Member of the 125th Street Business Improvement District and served a term as Vice President of the National Chaplains Association for Youth At-Risk.

Elisa C. Moore, Director of Special Projects for HCC and Deputy Coordinator of the Arches Program – In addition to other responsibilities as HCC’s Director of Special Projects, Ms. Moore will be the Deputy Coordinator (part time - .6 F.T.E.) for the Arches Program. Ms. Moore brings a wealth of professional management and program development experience to HCC and the Arches program. She holds a Graduate Certificate from the Middle Management Program of The Institute for Not-for-Profit Management at the Columbia University Business School. Previously, Ms. Moore was Director of Special Programs and Director of Training at the American Woman’s Center for Economic Development where she recruited business professionals and entrepreneurs to provide counseling and training services to assist participants,
managed all aspects of program outreach, and coordinated and monitored all support services
provided to program participants.

**Sal Jordan, Chief Financial Officer** - brings 38 years of accounting experience in both the
For–Profit and Non-Profit areas of Finance to the position of Chief Financial Officer. As CFO,
he is responsible for the overall fiscal performance of Harlem Commonwealth Council and the
Commonwealth Group of Companies and all aspects of its daily management. It is his
responsibility to insure that the financial resources are adequate to support the corporate goals.

4. **Experience in Harlem in Past 5 years** – Over the past five years, HCC has continued to
make significant contributions to Harlem. HCC continues to engineer new initiatives that foster
economic prosperity to Harlem’s residents and businesses alike. In keeping with our mission to
stimulate the overall economic development of the Harlem community through the creation of
enterprise, generation of jobs and empowerment of services, we have established a variety of
educational programs. These include our high quality *ESL* and *ABE* programs geared to
community residents and the growing immigrant community. We serve over 250 participants
during each 12-week cycle. **Now in planning for its fourth year, our Summer Youth Employment**
Program, funded by NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, provides young
people, ages 14-24, the opportunity to work with HCC community partners for seven weeks each
summer. **In Summer 2011, we served 90 young people**. Our on-site *Computer Program*,
featuring Microsoft Office Suite and geared to the general population, makes community
residents more marketable and contributes to narrowing the digital divide. Our HCC *Summer
Internship Program* provides six weeks of paid ‘real world’ experience for high school juniors
and seniors. **Our ‘Think, Move and Grow!’ after school program** at P.S. 154, The Harriet
Tubman Learning Center, stimulates thinking, creativity and discipline for upwards of 30 third,
fourth and fifth grade students with an emphasis on math, science and technology. In addition to our scholarship program which supports students to become healthcare professionals, our 12 week New Ventures entrepreneurial training program assists adults interested in starting a business with instruction in the fundamentals of smart business management and the development of an effective business plan. The program has assisted in the creation of 46 new businesses. In addition, our Harlem Entrepreneurial Fund has provided 13 Harlem-based small business owners with the funds necessary to expand, created 11 new businesses and provided loans to 24 Harlem and Bronx-based businesses which created 106 new jobs, including 91 filled by 96 low income individuals, of whom 18 were TANF recipients and 36 non-custodial parents.

5. Other Relevant Experience in Past 5 years – a. Operation of court-involved young adult program - Under contract with NYC DYCD, our Summer Youth Employment Program has engaged 65 “vulnerable” youth, ages 14-24 in each of the last three years, including court-involved young adults referred from social service agencies, the Department of Probation and the NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

b. Provision of Services to disconnected youth – Our Summer Youth Employment Program serves disconnected youth, male and female, ages 14-24, who are mostly court-involved, runaway, homeless or in foster care. The program successfully places 65 vulnerable youth in meaningful jobs with HCC employer partners who provide educational enrichment, job readiness and career exploration opportunities for program participants.

c. Provision of services to young adults – In addition to bringing Reverend Winley’s years of experience working with young adults to the Arches Intervention, HCC brings its continuing experience providing services to young adults through our DYCD-funded Summer Youth Employment Program and our NYS DOL-funded 15 month Independence Through Education
and Training program in 2010-2011 for 90 disconnected young adults, ages 18-24. The program provided participants the academic enrichment necessary to obtain a GED, along with Career Exploration and Work Readiness Skills and placed them with our corporate business partners.

d. **Operation of a program that involved a group process for young adults** - Reverend Winley, HCC’s Project Coordinator for the Arches Mentoring Intervention, brings more than a decade of experience running Positive Youth Development groups for troubled adolescents and young adults in a range of settings, including inside Rikers Island (Urban Eagle Mentoring Initiative), at a Harlem community school, and in an institutional residential Special Education setting.

e. **Application of values, principles and practices of positive youth development** - As Director of Positive Youth Development for St. Christopher’s, Inc., Reverend Winley has developed a host of groundbreaking Positive Youth Development practices, including *Rites of Passage*, *REAL Truths*, and opportunities for youth, ages 14-21 to *Learn and Serve*. These highly innovative interventions provide young people with the moral compass and enhanced decision-making skills focused on positive values they need to carry them through life. Reverend Winley’s work in Positive Youth Development at St. Christopher’s has been funded by the Office of Children and Family Services and recognized and supported with numerous grants from foundations and churches.

f. ** Provision of cognitive-behavioral interventions** – Reverend Winley’s *Real Truths* intervention with adolescents in residential Special Education is designed for youth who act out of their anxiety and pain and need to learn to talk about it. This highly interactive program is designed to guide adolescents in making personal decisions by helping them understand how the influences of others (e.g. individuals, family, peers and school) impact personality and making choices – especially negative choices. The weekly sessions encourage young people to be
accountable for their behavior. Participants are confronted with the critical issues facing them today, including drugs, sexual temptation, dating, incarceration, peer pressure, gangs, etc. In the context of these challenges, the teens explore problem solving, personal responsibility and consequential thinking.

g. **Provision of mentoring or coaching interventions** – Our NYS DOL-funded Independence Through Education and Training internships and our summer youth employment programs provide coaching, as well as informal mentoring for youth and young adult participants. In addition, along with mentoring at Rikers Island and with disconnected youth in the community through his Church-sponsored programs, Reverend Winley has developed a *Rites of Passage* intervention which he has implemented in several settings. *Rites of Passage* is designed to create an atmosphere of learning and fellowship for male adolescents, most of who come from families where a father was not present. Built around an eight-session curriculum, groups provide older males with an opportunity to recognize the issues facing them and understand they are not alone. Through the groups, they “connect” with men who become role models in their lives.

h. **Provision of services outside of 9-5 business hours** – HCC has long provided programs and services outside of business hours at its home site on 125th street. Our adult education classes are currently provided Monday-Thursday evenings until 9pm. The building opens at 8:30am weekdays and is open on weekends, as needed for special events and activities.

i. **Samples of Previously Completed Projects** – attached

**B. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

1. **Capacity to Incorporate Arches into Overall Operations** – The Harlem Commonwealth Council has a mission, history of services, commitments and partnerships in the Harlem Community that dovetail with the program and philosophy of the Arches Mentoring Intervention
and the Young Men’s Initiative. Our state-of-the-art facility located in the heart of Harlem has
the space, facilities and equipment necessary. We have the necessary technology (computers,
database management, network printing, internet and copying) to support effective management
systems and the administrative capacity to incorporate Arches, including years of experience
working with city and state contracts. We have already recruited a leading trainer, innovator,
and Harlem community leader as Project Coordinator, identified our Deputy Coordinator, and
recruited our first of two Mentor Team Leaders, a former NYC Probation officer, now with the
NYS Department of Parole, who has years of mentoring experience outside of work. We also
have identified a majority of our prospective mentors who fit the profile envisioned for Arches.

*An organizational chart showing how the Arches program and staff will relate to the overall
organization is attached.*

C. PROGRAM APPROACH

1. **Leadership and Staffing**

a. **How Senior Leadership will Support Project Coordinator** – The senior leadership of HCC
which includes HCC’s Director of Special Projects who will serve as part time (.6 F.T.E.)
Deputy Coordinator, will fully support the work of Reverend Winley as Project Coordinator in
recruiting mentors and delivering Arches. In addition, Reverend Winley and HCC’s
President/CEO, Dr. Joseph L. Tait, have been working together since Fall 2011 on an ongoing
initiative that brings Harlem service providers together every few weeks to explore collaboration
on new program opportunities to address the community needs, particularly of Harlem’s young
Black men. This existing planning collaboration represents a significant potential resource for
the Arches Mentoring Intervention, the Neighborhood Opportunities Network, and the Young
Men’s Initiative overall.
b. **Plan to Recruit/Hire Mentors** – HCC has already identified one of the two Mentor Team Leaders, Barry Winley, a Harlem resident and former Probation Officer, now with Parole (resume attached), as well as a significant pool of potential mentors. Recruitment will focus on “credible messengers” who are competent, culturally sensitive to providing services to persons of diverse cultural backgrounds, responsive to the needs of minority individuals, and have a first hand knowledge and experience with justice involved young adults.

*Potential Partners for Mentor Recruitment* – In addition to drawing on HCC’s educational, vocational and economic development partners in the community for mentor recruitment, Reverend Winley will draw his own extensive network of youth serving community partners, including Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the Christian Association for Youth Mentoring, and his Soul Saving Station church. Each of these organizations, in turn, has their own networks which will be mobilized to identify potential mentors.

*Recruitment of Recently Laid Off DOP Probation Officer Trainees* – The Project Coordinator, with assistance from Mentor Team Leader, Barry Winley, a former Probation Officer will reach out to the Probation officers working in the Harlem community for suggestions regarding the recruitment of laid off Probation Officer trainees. In addition, the Project Coordinator will provide job vacancy notices to DOP’s Human Resources Office for dissemination to previously laid-off agency employees who may be interested in applying for mentor positions.

*Mentor Screening* - All potential mentors will be interviewed by the Project Coordinator to determine their ability to commit to a full schedule of training, group sessions, mentoring 1:1, supervision, case conferencing, and participating in periodic group activities and events. He will also evaluate cultural competence, previous mentoring experience, including working with justice-involved young adults, and personality – in terms of suitability and likely contribution to
the mentoring team, as well as to program participants. While prospective mentors will not be asked directly about prior criminal justice involvement in the first interview, we will ascertain their experience with the justice system through subsequent discussion. Background checks with the NYS Sex Offender registry will be made before engaging individual mentors.

c. Availability for Ongoing Training and Technical Assistance - Availability for ongoing training and technical assistance is part of the job description of the full time Project Coordinator and the part time Deputy Coordinator. During recruitment of mentors, availability for up to 35 hours for training and technical assistance will be discussed. All mentors must commit to fully participate in ongoing training as part of their job description.

d. Evaluation of Mentors and Feedback – The Project Coordinator will be responsible for evaluation of mentors and providing them with feedback. He will utilize information from three primary sources: review of each mentor’s progress notes; a review of the mentee’s journals; and a review of each mentee’s progress in their Individual Achievement Plan developed with their the Probation Officer. In addition, the Project Coordinator will conduct periodic focus group sessions with program participants to solicit feedback and identify issues that need to be facilitated regarding the group experience and individual mentoring. The Project Coordinator also will ask the Probation Officers for any feedback they may have had from their probationers. Feedback will be provided to mentors in regular 1:1 supervision meetings, and in ongoing group supervision, debriefing, action dialogue sessions.

e. Appropriate Qualifications for Arches Staff – Three highly qualified people have already been identified for key Arches staff positions. These include:
Reverend Maurice D. Winley - Arches Project Coordinator - Reverend Maurice Winley will be Project Coordinator of the Arches Mentoring program. His qualifications are described under Organizational Experience - Senior Leadership (Section A.3.).

Elisa Moore – Arches Deputy Project Coordinator – Currently Director of Special Projects for HCC, Ms. Moore will be the part time (.6 F.T.E.) Deputy Coordinator for Arches. Her qualifications are described under Organizational Experience - Senior Leadership (Section A.3.).

Barry Winley, Mentor Team Leader – A NYC Probation Officer from 1994-2001, Barry Winley is currently a Parole Officer with the NYS Division of Parole. An African American, long time resident of Harlem, Mr. Winley hold a M.A. in Counseling and is a NYS licensed clinical social worker. He brings to the Arches Project years of experience in group facilitation, mentoring, and working with youth and young adults, especially with young Black men involved in the criminal justice system. His professional experience as both as a Parole and a Probation officer will help our mentors understand the challenges the Probation officers face in supervising the targeted population and their perspective on the progress, or lack of progress, their mentees are making. Resumes for Reverend Winley, Elisa Moore and Barry Winley are attached. A job description for the second Mentor Team Leader, not yet identified, is also attached.

2. Partnerships, Collaborations and Linkages

a. Partnerships/Collaborations with Similar Providers – Participants in the Arches Mentoring program will benefit from the significant resources available through HCC’s long standing partnerships and collaborations with well-established organizations that provide economic development, education and entrepreneurial support for Harlem’s residents. These
include job readiness, vocational training and placement, GED, professional certification and assistance with applications and financial aid for technical and higher education. We are also able to refer clients to mental health, anger management, conflict resolution, life skills, fatherhood and youth empowerment services. The availability of these resources is being enhanced by ongoing monthly meetings HCC has been hosting since last Fall of training, employment and mental health providers committed to exploring new collaborative opportunities focused on assisting and empowering young Black men.

b. How each Linkage will Help Participants - The utilization of the services available through our linkages with our community partners offers probationers significant opportunities that will help them meet the outcome goals in their Individual Achievement Plans. Through our linkages with the Manhattan Educational Opportunity Center and the Harlem Educational Opportunity Center, we will be able to facilitate referrals by the Probation Officers assigned to our mentees to GED classes, certification programs for Medical, Nursing and Medical Billing Assistants, and to Security Officer training. Through our linkage with Strive, Inc., our mentees will have access to job readiness, vocational training, and placement; to vocational training and assistance with placement through American Fire Control, and to vocational training for hospitality through the Starwood Organization. In addition, through Full Circle Health located in the Bronx, our program participants will have access to mental health, anger management, conflict resolution, life skills, fatherhood and youth empowerment services.

c. Collaboration with Other Applicant(s) in Different Community – Not Applicable

d. Letters of Commitment – Letters of Commitment and Linkages are attached.

3. Population to be Served
a. **Neighborhood Where Services Provided** – Program services will be provided at HCC’s headquarters located on the eastern border of Manhattan Community Board (District) 9 in the Manhattanville section of CD9, one of three historic neighborhoods comprising the district which also include Hamilton Heights and Morningside Heights. To the southwest, the Morningside Heights neighborhood is dominated by Columbia University and a host of secondary and post-secondary educational, religious and cultural institutions. To the north, gentrification in recent years in Hamilton Heights has created many blocks with beautiful brownstones and stately row houses. Community District 9 is home to a diverse population of African American, Afro-Caribbean, Latino and white residents. According to the Department of Planning’s most recent profile, the population of CD9 in 2000 was predominately Hispanic (43.2%), followed by Black (31.3%) and white residents (17.8%). Median income in CD9 among the 2000 census tracks ranged from $14,688 to $75,625, giving CD9 the highest overall income levels per census track among the two other Community Districts comprising Harlem (Central Harlem’s CD10 with income ranging from $9,375 to $27,472 and East Harlem’s CD11 with income tracks ranging from $9,320 to $58,619). These figures translate to the percentage of persons living below the poverty line in the census tracks in CD9 ranging from 8% to 47.7%, versus 19.4% to 55.1% in CD10 and 8.7% to 56.2% in CD11. While the three community districts are more or less comparable in population and size (excluding Randall’s Island in CD11), residents in CD9 received the lowest percentage of income support in 2010 (34.9%, versus 43.3% in CD10 and 46.5% in CD11). In the context of the downturn in the economy, however, figures from the 2000 census are tempered by the overall rising crime rate up by 4.4% to 20% in three of the four police precincts in CD9, with the exception of the 32nd precinct in Hamilton Heights which has experienced a 20% drop in crime (NYPD. CompStat Reports,
2/5/12). The 125th Street’s retail corridor which runs through the heart of Harlem’s CD9, 10 and 11 is the main shopping district for Upper Manhattan. It is also a convergence point for many neighborhoods and NYC’s center for African American culture, with numerous locally and nationally known arts, cultural and entertainment facilities.

b. **Target Population** – HCC will service four groups of 20 (2 parallel groups of 20 at a time during each 6 month period), ages 20-24, for a total of 80 per year.

c. **Strengths and Needs of Target Population** – **Needs** – The need for education and employment opportunities for young Black men involved in the criminal justice system is obvious and well-documented. The consequences of the lack of a positive framework for decision making, negative peer pressure, and the ascendency of criminal thinking and self-destructive behaviors are manifest in the fact that the targeted population is already involved in the criminal justice system. What is known, but less frequently and effectively addressed, is the impact that father absenteeism and the lack of proper male roles has had on the targeted population. As a consequence, these young men are often times left feeling insecure, angry, resentful, prone to violence and given to unnecessary aggression. This myriad of emotions also effects low school performance and/or increased recidivism. Without fathers or proper role models, these young men typically will be resistant to all forms of authority. The “invisible father” engenders confusion, poor self-image, diminished self-esteem and questions surrounding identity. Filling the void with negative role models, many young men find their father and identity on the streets. To counteract self-loathing and self-destructive behaviors, the young men comprising the targeted population need to be able to express their feelings safely and positively, while an adult with whom they can “connect” listens to them with concern and understanding and provides a positive role model.
Strengths – The Arches mentoring intervention is first and foremost a strength-based approach to changing behavior. It is designed to build on untapped resources that are potential assets within each participant. The young men, most of whom come from dysfunctional backgrounds, have demonstrated resiliency and an ability to survive. They have already had life defining experiences. Once they get past their denial, their experiences can be successfully processed and positive life lessons can be extracted. In transformative mentoring, the key to success lies in harnessing and redirecting the energies that drive them, particularly the anger used in destructive patterns of behavior. This negative energy can be refocused and used to build positive character. The fact that these are young men means that they can be life long learners. All of our mentors will be oriented to this strengths-based perspective.

4. Participant Incentives

a. Plan to Integrate Extrinsic and Intrinsic Incentives – In the Arches program, extrinsic and intrinsic incentives will come together as participants take ownership of their Individual Achievement Plans and begin to sense progress. They will be encouraged to “own” the group process, topics and input, while holding each other accountable, and expressing their vulnerability and fears. Beyond the stipends provided for “showing up” and complying with probation requirements, the most significant extrinsic incentive will be the opening of educational and vocational gateways, including internships, training and employment opportunities available through HCC and our consortium of partners in the community. In the context of a transformative mentoring model, the motivation to embrace these educational and vocational incentives will be stimulated and enhanced by the non-financial incentives described below as the young participants realize their own potential.
b. Non-Financial Incentives – The non-financial incentives for the young men in the Arches program will be dynamic, inspirational and motivational. For the majority who come from essentially fatherless families, one of the most significant non-financial incentives will be replacing the pain and temporal gains they have experienced on the street with the connection to a mentor who can help “father” them into manhood, identifying the missing pages in their lives, and guiding them toward a redefinition of their identity. This opportunity to connect and redefine their identity will be enhanced in the context of becoming a part of a community, a “brotherhood” of young men built on authentic relationships in which mentees can see their potential as assets, able to contribute to their families and their community. In addition, progress in the program and success with their Individual Achievement Plan will serve as significant intrinsic incentives for program participants.

c. Plan for Provision of Hot Food – HCC routinely works with nearly a dozen neighborhood food purveyors and restaurants who regularly cater both our small group meetings and our large events. Inexpensive, healthy menus will be planned and ordered by the Deputy Project Coordinator. The vendors will bring ready to serve hot food for each group meeting. We will develop a revolving calendar for each meeting, pairing one mentor and one or two of his mentees who will be responsible for putting out the food as their contribution to the group as part of our for community building. We will use these meals, as well as special events, to recognize personnel and group milestones, also as part of community building.

d. Plan for Provision of Metro Cards – The Deputy Project Coordinator will provide mentors with single round-trip metro cards at each meeting to distribute to participants. Mentors will sign a preprinted checklist at each meeting indicating who received a card at the meeting and return
the checklist and any undistributed cards to the Deputy Project Coordinator. The Deputy Project Coordinator will be responsible for the purchase, storage and tracking of metro cards.

5. **The Group Process**

   a. **Plan to Integrate Interactive Journaling Curriculum** – The Interactive Journaling Series, *Forward Thinking*, is similar to the *Rites of Passage* curriculum our Project Coordinator, Reverend Winley, has been using with troubled adolescents for the past five years. The Interactive Journaling curriculum will be at the heart of the group process. Each of the seven modules will be used over a period of 3-4 weeks as a means for framing group discussion to help participants make positive changes in their thoughts, feelings and behaviors. The power of choice, be it expressed as “the choices you make today are the choices you will live by” or as the curriculum motto puts it, “it’s all about the little choices I make each day,” will be continuously reinforced. In addition to exploring issues and strategies for change in the groups, specific strategies related to particularly significant issues for individual mentees will be further explored in the 1:1 sessions. Each new module will be introduced to the group at a “launch” session which could include a presentation by a guest speaker, or some other mechanism to set the stage.

   b. **Participant Orientation** - Each participant will meet with the Project Coordinator to review program expectations, go over the ground rules, review their IAP, and answer any concerns or questions before the groups commence. The Project Coordinator will facilitate introductions to the mentors. Prior to implementing the curriculum, expectations and ground rules will be reviewed when the majority of the cohort meet for the first time. As part of the community-building process, at this initial session, all of the participants will be asked to sign a group contract. The contract will state: “*As a group, we make a commitment to one another to learn together and encourage one another. We accept responsibility for regular attendance at*
meetings, representing the Arches program through our proper conduct at all times and for completing individual assignments. We will work together as a group and we are committed to completing the Interactive Journaling curriculum. We will work together, help one another and succeed as a group.” This pledge will be repeated and other elements of the group orientation will be provided as a reinforcement whenever a new participant joins the cohort. The Deputy Coordinator will facilitate site tours for participants as they are accepted into the program.

c. **Safe Space and Behavioral Norms** – The young men targeted by the Arches Mentoring initiative need an affirming environment, a safe space where they feel respected that supports the development of true character, vision and purpose in their lives. HCC’s Arches program will provide a place where they will be both physically and emotionally safe, a place where they can acquire a sense of identity and self-worth through meaningful relationships with both peers and mentors. Ground rules and behavioral norms for group and 1:1 meetings will be established during orientation, along with expectations for evaluating the relational context in terms of the quality of relationships with mentors and the transformative goals of the program. The format for the twice weekly group meetings will be flexible and adjusted when things come up to which a response is needed. The key to the transformative experience lies in a person-centered approach, so that mentees take ownership for themselves, and don’t see the program as just another requirement of probation. Thus, behavioral norms will be reinforced by the group through opening activities shaped with significant participant input, in the larger group presentations and smaller ‘quad’ subgroup discussions, and in the closing circle.

d. **Procedures for Intake, Orientation and Placement of Participants into Mentoring Groups** – *Intake* - Each participants will be asked by the Project Coordinator to complete an abbreviated psycho-social in an interview format to ascertain family history and personal metrics
such as diet, fitness and recreation, personal philosophy, attitudes, and friendships. Each participant will be asked to sign a statement of Individual Expectations, agreeing to be actively involved, physically, emotionally and intellectually; to be committed to his own personal growth and development through active participation in discussion and group activities, to be respectful to peers, staff and self, and be consistent in attending meetings.

**Orientation** - procedures for Orientation are provided in section C.5.b., above.

**Placement into Mentoring Groups** - The Project Coordinator will match each participant with a mentor, based on suitability determined from the baseline metrics ascertained in the Intake interview, the IAP (if available) and other information provided by the Probation Officer, and the experience and strengths of the mentor, and the age and experience of other mentees already assigned to the mentor. Once assigned, the Project Coordinator will conduct a second interview with the mentor and mentee together to set up a 1:1 mentoring schedule based on their availability and address any concerns of either.

e. **Facility and Appropriateness for Program Needs** – The Harlem Commonwealth Council owns the state-of-the-art facility located in the heart of Harlem on 125th Street which was recently toured by Catrina Prioleau, Director of NeON and Robert Eusebio, Director of New Initiatives. Located just west of St. Nicholas Avenue, HCC occupies four of the six floors in its fully renovated, modernized elevator building which also includes a fully finished basement. Each floor is approximately 4,000 sq.ft. (slightly smaller on the lobby floor). The building houses numerous fully furnished, up-to-date classrooms and spaces that can be used for mentoring groups, 1:1 mentoring, and for program-wide events and activities for mentors and participants. Modern, clean restrooms are located on each floor and a fully equipped kitchen is available for cooking and serving. Our state-of-the-art Fauser Technology Center with 20
ergonomically–designed computer work stations offers hands-on computer training and literacy classes which could be available to Arches participants referred by their Probation Officer. The first floor auditorium, complete with stage and built-in room dividers, could be available for Arches trainings, borough-wide and even citywide meetings of Arches providers and DOP staff.

f. **Location in Targeted Neighborhood** – HCC is located at 361 West 125th Street, just within Community Board 9 and on the border of Community Board 10. Our site is a short walk from the NYS office building and is surrounded by restaurants and one of the city’s most vibrant community shopping districts.

g. **Building/Equipment Meet Local Fire, Health and Safety Standards** – Fully renovated in the last decade, our building and equipment meet the latest local fire, health and safety standards, including fire alarm monitoring and a fully ADA handicap accessible elevator, doorways, corridors and restrooms. A full time security guard staffs the lobby entrance security station and monitors in real time video surveillance throughout the building, including stairwells.

h. **Accessibility to Public Transportation** - HCC has one of the most accessible locations in Manhattan. Located directly on Harlem’s busiest street, HCC is just down the block from the ACB and D trains, within walking distance of the 2-3 subway trains, and a short bus ride from the 1, 4,5 and 6 subway lines. Nearly a dozen crosstown and North/South bus lines pass directly in front, or within 1-2 blocks of our building on 125th Street.

i. **Safe Environment Conducive to Positive Youth Development** – HCC’s program model is built around the creation of an emotionally safe environment where young adults will feel secure exposing their vulnerabilities and reaching toward a new, positive sense of purpose and identity. The physical environment at HCC will reinforce the way in which participants are valued and respected. The fully furnished, clean, state-of-the-art facilities, including new equipment, art
work and tasteful color schemes throughout, set an uplifting tone for all activities in the building, creating a safe environment conducive to Positive Youth Development. Access to unused floors can be locked off and all floors, access points and stairs are monitored in real time by video surveillance, ensuring a safe environment for mentors and program participants.

6. **Meetings with Mentors**

a. **Organization of 1:1 Meetings with Mentors** - Each mentor will work out a regular weekly schedule for 1:1 meetings with their mentees which will be reviewed and posted by the project staff. Thirty (30) minute 1:1 sessions will take place before or after the group sessions. If a mentor indicates a need to meet longer, or more frequently, they will be accommodated. Alternatively, as the relationship matures between mentors and mentees, mentors will be encouraged to meet mentees off-site in a public place approved in advance by the Project Coordinator to promote confidence and bonding. Project staff will develop a database of opportunities, some identified by staff, others by the mentors. These sessions will count toward the required weekly 1:1 mentoring sessions. In addition, mentors will be expected to be able to connect with everyone, not just the four mentees assigned to them, so that if a mentor is not present, the group can go on with the other mentors.

b. **Mentor Availability** – All mentors must commit to a full schedule of training, twice-weekly mentoring sessions, weekly 1:1 sessions with each mentee, and participation in supervision and special events and activities. We will have an open system where selected contact information for all mentors will provided to all program participants. We will implement a communication protocol in which mentees first contact their designated mentor for assistance and support, but will be able to call another mentor with whom they feel comfortable, if they are unable to reach their own mentor. This will reinforce the “we” team effect for both mentors and mentees. The
protocol will be reinforced by the implementation of a closed social networking platform on Facebook, “HCC Harlem Arches,” to keep everyone in contact and support community-building.

7. Project Coordinators

a. Number and Role of Project Coordinators – There will be one full time Project Coordinator and one part time (.6 F.T.E.) Deputy Project Coordinator.

The full-time Project Coordinator will be responsible for the overall supervision of the Arches program, staff and mentors, recruitment and hiring of mentors, pairing mentors with mentees, and the ongoing supervision and evaluation of mentors and feedback, as well as handling issues that may arise between mentors and mentees, or among mentees. The Project Coordinator will participate in all DOP trainings, be the contact person for Technical Assistance provided by DOP, participate in Arches borough and city-wide network meetings, attend NeON meetings, and be the primary point of contact with each Probation Officer. He will also oversee implementation of the Interactive Journaling curriculum and the group process, oversee case conferencing, review, sign off on monthly reports to DOP, including milestones, outputs and outcomes, and be responsible for using data for continuous quality improvement to strengthen program performance, participant experience and program effectiveness.

The part time (.6 F.T.E.) Deputy Project Coordinator will assist the Project Coordinator in all aspects of the program, as needed and directed by the Project Coordinator. The Deputy Project Coordinator will participate in all DOP trainings. Specific responsibilities will include scheduling of groups, events and activities; distributing, collecting and monitoring attendance sign-in reports and progress notes; provision and monitoring of metro cards to mentors to distribute to their mentees, and planning hot food menus, ordering, monitoring deliveries and tracking hot food expenses. She will be responsible for the acquisition and distribution of
curricula and any other materials, collecting progress notes, collating and compiling data, and preparing monthly reports to DOP on milestones, outputs and outcomes to be reviewed by the Project Coordinator, and forwarding them to DOP.

b. How Project Coordinator Will Ensure Contract Deliverables – The Project Coordinator will be in regular contact (daily, if necessary) with area Probation Officers to ensure sufficient and timely participant referrals so that a full cohort is enrolled at the start of each 6 month session. The Project Coordinator and/or the Deputy Project Coordinator will review attendance after each group session and the 1:1 mentoring sessions weekly to monitor participant retention. If a session is missed, mentors will promptly contact their mentee by phone or in person to find out why and bring participants back to the groups and/or 1:1 sessions. The mentor will report in writing to the Project Coordinator the circumstance and results of their follow up. The Project Coordinator will provide ongoing training to the mentors on follow-up protocols and strategies, including reaching out to family and other significant persons in their mentee’s life. If a session is missed without mitigating circumstances reported by the mentor, or if the mentor cannot connect with the mentee, the Project Coordinator will notify the Probation Officer. If a participant is arrested, the Project Coordinator and the mentor will consult with the Probation Officer to determine the possibility of bringing the mentee back into the program.

c. How Project Coordinator Will Schedule Group and 1:1 sessions – During the training phase, the Project Coordinator will determine with the mentors which weekday evenings (and possibly Saturday mornings) work best for them for the twice weekly group sessions and the required weekly 1:1 meetings. All mentor/mentee teams will meet in the same time frame. Each mentor will work out a regular weekly schedule for 1:1 meetings with their mentees which will be reviewed and posted by the project staff. Thirty (30) minute 1:1 sessions will take place
before or after the group sessions. If a mentor indicates a need to meet longer, or more frequently, they will be accommodated.

**d. How Project Coordinator Will Supervise Mentors** – The Project Coordinator will meet each mentor for up to ½ hour at least once every other week for supervision. In the intervening weeks, the Project Coordinator will provide supplemental training for up to one hour with all of the mentors. In addition, the Project Coordinator will participate in weekly case conferencing and lead weekly debriefing sessions as part of the group team facilitation. There will be an option to extend any of these sessions or meet more frequently, if needed.

**e. How Project Coordinator will Communicate with Probation Officers** – Since program participants will be referred from the Probation office located in Harlem, we anticipate the Project Coordinator will be in regular (typically weekly, especially at the beginning of each cohort) contact by phone or in person with their Probation Officers. The two will review participants’ progress on the Individual Achievement Plans and general progress based on feedback from progress notes. The Project Coordinator will report on attendance and solicit insights and feedback from the Probation Officer. The Project Coordinator also will bring potential referral resources to the attention of Probation Officers, including both those generally available to the targeted population, or specifically appropriate for an individual probationer. The Project Coordinator may also help facilitate a referral, if requested by the Probation Officer.

8. **Outcomes, Data Collection and Reporting**

a. **Record keeping, Data Collection, Documenting/Reporting Outputs/Outcomes** – Building on HCC’s experience with record keeping, data collection and the report of contract deliverables,
the Project Coordinator, assisted by the Deputy Coordinator, will implement a robust system to ensure fully compliant record keeping, data collection and the documenting/reporting of outputs and outcomes. This will include progress notes for each mentee which will be kept in locked files and attendance in groups and 1:1 mentoring which will be entered into a database on a weekly basis from sign in sheets submitted by the mentors for tracking and reporting attendance and retention. A scale will be developed for mentors to use on a weekly basis to measure progress in the program (in groups and 1:1) which will provide a quantifiable indicator as a component for ongoing evaluation. This will be supplemented by a scale which will provide quantifiable indicators of progress with the Interactive Journaling and in meeting milestones in Individual Achievement Plans.

b. Previous Experience Collecting/Reporting Data - Both the Project Coordinator and the Deputy Coordinator are professionals with experience in contract compliance and reporting. As detailed in her attached resume, the Deputy Coordinator for Arches, Elisa Moore, has a decade of experience supervising programs with comparable, if not more extensive, record keeping, data collection and reporting responsibilities. This includes HCC’s current and recent contracts with NYC DYCD and NYS DOL, as well as at the Women’s Center for Education and Career Development where she served as Manager of the New Directions Project prior to joining HCC’s senior staff.

c. Quality Control for Data - HCC will draw on its years of experience with government contracts collecting and analyzing data to ensure quality control. All relevant material gathered will be in individual client folders and noted on a running master checklist for each client. All folders will be kept in a locked cabinet. Tracking data for attendance, 1:1 mentoring and achievement of milestones and weekly progress (based on a scale to be developed) will be
entered into a database for the Mentoring program and reports generated for review by the Project Coordinator, Deputy Coordinator, and Mentor Team Leaders, where appropriate.

d. How Collected Data Used to Strengthen Program Performance/Participant Experience

The Project Coordinator will monitor all of the data collected at the end of each week. He will review the results with the Leadership Team consisting of the Deputy Project Coordinator and Mentor Team Leaders at weekly debriefing sessions to identify areas of the program that need more support through additional group training for mentors, or more supervision for individual mentors. This will be supplemented by information that may come out of case conferencing. The team will create an action plan that will be placed in the mentee’s program file and discussed with the mentor as part of supervision, and directly with the mentor and mentee, if deemed appropriate.

e. How Outcome Data Used to Improve Program Effectiveness – Outcome data will be used to evaluate overall program effectiveness, as well as the effectiveness of individual program components, including the use of the Interactive Journaling curriculum, the group process, 1:1 mentoring, and special events and activities. This will include program effectiveness on both an individual level and collective level for the cohort. The results of the data will be used by the Leadership Team to adjust, supplement, or modify the group formats, group process and utilization of group time experience. It will also be used to inform the individual supervision of mentors.

f. Procedures for Monitoring Attendance, Participation and Intervening to Support Retention– Each mentor will have each mentee sign an attendance sheet at each group session, which he will then sign himself and give to the Deputy Project Coordinator after each group meeting. Similarly, both will sign in for the 1:1 mentoring sessions. Having both sign will
reinforce the mentee’s taking responsibility which will be acknowledged and supported by the mentor. The Leadership Team will work with each mentor to support his efforts to ensure retention. Team members will also intervene directly, in appropriate and most effective ways, as needed with the mentee, with whatever family and/or community support system the mentee may have, and with the Department of Probation. The importance of attendance and the participation in all program activities will be reinforced at every meeting. In addition, the Project Coordinator will regularly review mentor progress notes and how mentees are doing with their journaling to identify issues that may impact on retention. He will then respond to support retention.

g. **Anticipated Major Barriers to Program Retention and How Addressed** – The greatest barrier to program retention will be changing the mindset of the mentees, so they take ownership of the process, becoming a participant, not just a recipient – so they see the program as a lifetime opportunity. Confidentiality and support from “credible messengers” who may have been there themselves are paramount so that participants do not see the program as an extension of the Department of Probation. We will encourage participant “buy in” to transformative mentoring by creating a trusting and receptive environment where they are willing to be vulnerable, transparent and reflective, especially with things that make them uncomfortable. This is the “intimacy” that relates to creating a supportive brotherhood where “brothers” remove their masks in a “safe” space. The mentors will listen and be observant and responsive. As “credible messengers,” they will share their faults, as well as their victories in order to create trust and demonstrate a path toward change. Through the *Forward Thinking* curriculum, we will address precipitating factors of “What Got me Here?” including family issues, pressures to make money, and gang issues. To the extent possible, we will seek to engage whatever family and/or community supports can be identified for each mentee. Through an existing linkage, we can
work with the Probation Officer to secure a referral for mental health and family counseling, if needed. We will also be able to assist referral of participants by the Probation Officers directly into HCC’s vocational training and employment program, or those of our partners, that offer tangible, potentially lifetime rewards for achieving an appropriate level of progress in the Arches program and in their Individual Achievement Plan. The achievement of such reward will support retention through the duration of the Arches six-month program.