Chicago ATI Collaborative  
**Roseland Youth Leadership Development Process**

Often, adults are seen and heard as the authorities on and spokespeople for issues of youth violence. Adults prescribe how a community should reduce its reliance on incarceration, policing, criminalization, punishment, and judgment. But what would it look like if we insist that the young black people who are most impacted by these problems lead efforts to determine their solutions?

We have developed a 6-month youth leadership development process, targeting young people 13-24 years old, that is structured by restorative justice principles, practices, and values. The goals are:

1. to equip groups of young people from Roseland with practical tools, strategies, and resources to determine and address their own needs.
2. to consistently empower, support, and resource young black people to co-create and lead processes of community accountability and conflict resolution.
3. to organize community-supported mechanisms to engender safety, healing, accountability, and self-reliance without the police.
4. to actively de-criminalize young black people, reduce rates of arrest and police contact, and to depopulate jails, Illinois youth prisons, and the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center.
5. to link with community partners and assets identified by the ATI Collaborative, but also to function independently of established institutions or organizations.

| Phase One: Outreach | • Working with community partners and assets (identified by the ATI Collaborative), visit with justice system-involved young people in the community; invite them to participate in twice-weekly values-based community-building process.  
• Share plan with adults in the community; ask young people to identify racially- and culturally- specific mentors they would like to participate in process.  
Approx. 1 month  
Visits to various youth-serving programs |
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| Phase Two: Values-Based Community-Building (Prevention) | • Using restorative justice principles, structure a space in which a consistent group of 16 young people and 4 adult mentors can gather to: share stories; build familial and kinship relationships; address historical trauma and legacies of oppression; define a shared set of values and practice accountability to them; discuss and identify the priority needs of their community.  
• Arrange guest speakers, creative arts workshops, field trips, and other relationship-building activities as determined by young people.  
• Discuss vision for a Community Self-Reliance Demonstration Project that is adapted and responsive to community-specific needs.  
Approx. twice a week, 2.5 months  
Meetings in a safe, local physical location |
| Phase Three: Community Self-Reliance Demonstration Project (Intervention) | • Collectively choose one community-specific need on which to focus. Develop and implement strategy and mechanisms to systematically address it, prioritizing community self-reliance and empowerment of localized leadership.  
• Identify, empower, and resource an intergenerational team to lead Community Self-Reliance Demonstration Project. Provide targeted training to build leaders’ capacity to facilitate and train others in restorative justice-based conflict resolution and community accountability processes.  
• Develop plan to sustain self-reliance systems: both preventative community-building efforts, and specific community accountability interventions.  
• Assess Project’s impact using Participatory Evaluation process (see below).  
• **Transition out of community**: transfer incipient Community Self-Reliance Demonstration Project into hands of homegrown, intergenerational leadership.  
Approx. 2.5 months |
Once a Community Self-Reliance Demonstration Project is operational and left in the hands of localized intergenerational leadership, our focus will shift to providing ongoing technical assistance, and to replicating this youth leadership development process with a new group of young people and adult mentors from the community.

This work lays the groundwork for real justice reinvestment. Arresting and detaining Chicago’s young people is astronomically expensive. Funds should not be dumped into a system that is punitive, flagrantly racist, and unaccountable – or monopolized by progressive institutions seeking change. Instead, resources should be reinvested in community-based infrastructures that socially and economically empower residents of neighborhoods most heavily impacted by policing and incarceration. These infrastructures should position community members (rather than outside experts, authorities, or institutions) to be the primary custodians and caretakers of community justice. Through an iterative Participatory Evaluation (PE) process – undertaken during Phase Three – we expect that community residents will be able to show that the processes, practices, and protocols that they develop (as part of their Community Self-Reliance Demonstration Projects) are a more effective, restorative, durable, and cost-efficient way to cultivate safety and accountability.

Roles of ATI Youth Leadership Development Team:

+ 4 facilitators: use restorative justice principles and practices to facilitate Values-Based Community-Building processes and to empower community participants to develop Community Self-Reliance Demonstration Project. Facilitate conflict resolution and community accountability processes. Pass off leadership and transition out of the community. Provide ongoing technical assistance as needed.

+ 1 project coordinator: manage all operations (logistics, documentation and record-keeping, communications) for Youth Leadership Development Process (including supporting Participatory Evaluation process).

+ 1 Participatory Evaluation facilitator: beginning during Phase Three (with launch of Community Self-Reliance Demonstration Project), facilitate (rather than oversee) 4-month community-led assessment process divided into three parts (Design, Internal Implementation, Analysis and Reporting). Support community participants to design their own tools for evaluation, and to consistently implement those tools within the context of the Demonstration Project. Provide training and coaching on: evaluation methodology and instrument design; consistent data collection and record-keeping; data entry, transcribing; coding and data analysis; report writing and publishing.

+ 1 participatory budgeting facilitator: after Phase Three, help community participants develop seed grant budget that will sustain homegrown, intergenerational leadership of Community Self-Reliance Demonstration Project.

+ Guest speakers and teaching artists: conduct various expressive arts and skill-building workshops (e.g. creative writing, street law, financial literacy, quilting, urban agriculture, black history). Topics dictated by community participants.

Roles of community participants:

This Youth Leadership Development Process prioritizes neighborhood economic development: it responds to disproportionately high unemployment rates in Chicago’s communities of color* by offering consistent year-long part-time work (5 hours a week) to young black people.

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* Traditionally, the responsibility to analyze and assess the success and impact of restorative justice is outsourced to an external – and often non-local – evaluator. The PE model offers an approach that emphasizes sovereignty and self-determination, and eschews this traditional reliance on expert systems. It allows community stakeholders – and young people especially – to tell their own stories, and to practice speaking to their lives and conditions in a transformative way.

† In 2014, 46.6% of Chicago’s 20 to 24-year-old black males were out of school and unemployed. That same year, 35.3% of black females were out of school and out of work (compared to a national average of 24.7%). The highest concentrations of youth unemployment occur in neighborhoods (such as Roseland) on Chicago’s South and West Sides. (Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago, “Lost: The Crisis of Jobless and Out Of School Teens and
+ 16 young people: justice system-involved young people (ages 13-24) from Roseland participate in Values-Based Community-Building processes. They: practice restorative justice principles; discuss community-specific needs; develop, pilot, then assume leadership of Community Self-Reliance Demonstration Project.

+ 4 adult mentors: build non-paternalistic relationships with young people through Values-Based Community-Building processes; leverage these relationships to provide individualized mentoring and support.

+ 10 Participatory Evaluation researchers: an intergenerational group of community participants work as researchers and evaluators, using their own voices, creativity, and expertise to measure the success and impact of the Community Self-Reliance Demonstration Project. Taking ownership over every facet of the assessment process, they: design evaluation methodologies and protocols; gain transferrable research (data collection and analysis) and project management skills; collaboratively report on and publish their findings and recommendations.

Cost summary: see attached ‘Youth Leadership Development Process – Annual Costs’