

1. Statement of the Problem

Program Purpose: Until recently, there was no established reentry program for juveniles in the City of Saint Louis. This changed in 2013 when grant funding generously provided by both the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Second Chance Act (SCA) allowed the establishment of YOLO (You Only Live Once) – STL. YOLO is designed to bring all resources available from a variety of stakeholders, pre- and post-release, to juveniles leaving the system and returning primarily to distressed communities in North St. Louis City.

This area carries the highest crime rates, dropout rates, and juvenile delinquency rates in the State of Missouri, and presents a series of challenges and barriers to success for young men and women. Expanding YOLO with a technology career program and associated career track will measurably increase the number of youth to receive jobs; the number of youth who graduate from high school or obtain a GED; and the number of youth accepted into a pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship programs, and post secondary school.

The St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE) seeks to address the multiple barriers with the active assistance of Ranken Technical College (RTC), a prestigious institution that reaches out to many hundreds of low-income students annually. The disciplined learning environment they offer will help reinforce measurable positive behaviors and decrease the traits that may lead youth to have new interactions with the juvenile justice system.

The proposed YOLO-Tech Training program is comprehensively designed to help youth make a smooth and productive transition into society post-release, and is especially timely as it will coincide with The Northside Regeneration Project. This private/public partnership will bring infrastructure, aesthetic, education, healthcare improvements, and most importantly quality jobs to thousands of acres of property in North St. Louis. Young men and women returning there will

thus be able to participate in an ongoing revitalization of their community, the most sweeping of its kind in the history of St. Louis and the region.

Local Demand: Ranken Technical College has a variety of established and successful curricula; the chosen focus areas for this project are automotive maintenance, service and repair; building trades, and Information Technology. Although the St. Louis area has suffered in terms of lost automotive manufacturing capability, the Missouri Economic Research & Information Center (MERIC) predicts excellent long-term growth in the repair/technician field. Demand in the construction trades has been increasing and is expected to accelerate as the result of wide-ranging renewal efforts in St. Louis City, the result of private/public partnerships. IT also continues to demonstrate strong growth. Representative MERIC’s survey-based projections up to 2020 for St. Louis are summarized below.

<u>Position Category</u>	<u>Career Grade</u>	<u>Growth Rate</u>	<u>Mean Wage est.</u>
<i>Automotive Body, Related Repairers</i>	B	12.79 %	\$40,000
<i>Automotive Service Technicians</i>	B+	9.23%	\$35,000
<i>Construction Laborers</i>	A	19.12%	\$44,000
<i>Construction Equipment Operators</i>	A	21.86%	\$53,800
<i>Computer Systems Analysts</i>	A+	8.89%	\$76,000
<i>Computer Support Specialists</i>	B+	7.73%	\$48,000

Jurisdiction: The jurisdiction to be served falls under the 22nd Circuit Court based in St. Louis, Missouri, namely the Family Court and Juvenile Division. The Division operates a secure, residential Juvenile Detention Center where youth are temporarily held in custody awaiting disposition, until released by the judge. Upon admission, youth are given a state wide Missouri Juvenile Detention Assessment. The St. Louis City Juvenile Detention Center is a participating Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) site. Personal digital devices are forbidden, internet access is limited and all computer time is closely supervised, thus no web-based criminal

or other negative behavior should occur while in detention. It should be noted that SLATE has an established rapport with both 22nd Circuit Court Judge David C. Mason and his predecessor, Judge Jimmy Edwards, who helped establish the Innovative Concept Family as an alternative to formal involvement with juvenile justice.

Summary of Current Job Training: SLATE is the official Workforce Development agency for the City of St. Louis and as such works with numerous training providers, employers and community partners to ensure positive career preparation and job searches. SLATE has operated a youth program since 1974, serves hundreds of youth annually, and currently sees 80% of participants go on to full-time employment or post-secondary education.

SLATE has administered the Graduate! St. Louis Workforce Consortium, the result of a Community Based Job Training grant, since 2010. The period of performance ended in December 2013, with a total of 4,000 participants of whom 2,500 received credentials/certificates of value; approximately 1,800 have been confirmed as employed. SLATE also participants in the multi-agency grant-funded St. Louis Bioscience Jobs Accelerator Project, and is well on the way to meeting the goal of 60 quality On-the-Job Training (OJT) placements in this sector by 2015. The previous YOLO youth reentry grants have only recently completed the planning phase(s); recruitment is proceeding at a rapid pace and it is expected that between them 150 at-risk youth will be successfully served.

Target Population: SLATE proposed to serve 35 youth through a technology career track component, ranging from ages 16-19 upon recruitment. Typically, over 3,000 delinquency referrals are received by the City of St. Louis Family Court each year, the primary source of new participants for this and other related YOLO programs. Of these an estimated 92 percent were African-American, 67 percent were male; they typically ranged in age from 14-17. Moreover, the delinquency offense most frequently referred to the Family Court is stealing under \$500. The

2nd offense was assault in the 3rd degree and the 3rd was property damage. 2012 detention statistics for St. Louis show that of 564 total juveniles detained, 542 were African American and 313 were repeat admissions. In 2012, 688 felony offenses by youth were referred to the Courts.

Target Population Justification: Through YOLO, SLATE and our partners seek to minimize a trend towards detention and juvenile arrests, steps that carry a number of significant negative consequences and implications regarding future behavioral problems and diminished opportunities. Specifically, mental illness, educational barriers, and future employment obstacles have been identified as negative consequences of detention. Research finds that up to two-thirds of detainees have some type of mental disorder (Grisso, 2004) and that detention can aggravate existing mental conditions and increase the need for treatment (Holman & Ziedenberg, 2006).

It is anticipated that all 35 participants will fall into the '*high risk*' category. The risk factors that confront the St. Louis City youth target population are too numerous to fully describe here, but include a rate of gun violence more than three times the average of larger cities, a household poverty rate of 35%, a public school dropout rate of over 25% (nearly last in the State of Missouri), and Census records that show only 55% of all individuals under the age of 25 in North St. Louis City have a high school diploma or GED.

To confirm participant categories, SLATE uses the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory™ (YLS/CMI™), a risk/needs assessment and case management tool combined into one convenient system YLS/CMI helps probation officers, psychologists, and social workers identify the youth's major needs, strengths, barriers, and incentives; select the most appropriate goals for him or her; and produce an effective case management plan.

Baseline Recidivism Rate: The proposed program will seek as a benchmark to divert all participants away from any detention and prevent further contact with the Family Court system in St. Louis. Recidivism will be the ultimate measure of success for this program, defined as a

return to secure confinement as the result of a new adjudication or a violation of the terms of supervision. The results will be measured on a regular basis throughout the program period and the 12-month follow-up period for each offender. As a baseline, a thorough study conducted by the Florida Dept. of Corrections found that young offenders released from detention recidivated at 12 months at the rate of 40%. Nationally, recent “get tough on crime policies” in the U.S. have led to increases in the confinement of nonviolent, low flight risk offenders (Stanfield, 1999). In 2007, the juvenile arrest rate for violent offenses had fallen from an all-time high in 1994 of 500 per 100,000 juveniles to about 295 per 100,000.

The acclaimed Missouri Model of youth rehabilitation, involving less detention time and more one on one and peer counseling, has proven itself an effective way to reintegrate at-risk youth. A recent study released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (Mendel, Richard A., *The Missouri Model*, 2010) found that the percentage of youth recommitted to juvenile custody within one year in Missouri is only 17.1%, a testament to the effectiveness of this more compassionate, holistic model; YOLO embraces and incorporates the Missouri Model.

Personnel/Facilities: Ranken Technical College, the Detention Center, the Family Courts and other partners have appropriate security measures and personnel, and training space needed to support the youth participants as an in-kind project cost. A FT Coordinator and PT Job Developer will be stationed at SLATE to ensure overall program goals are met; the bulk of the grant-funded project costs will be in the form of tuition assistance and instruction at Ranken, and paid work experiences for each participant administered through SLATE. Sub contracts will be awarded to a Case Management / Legal Services provider and a Professional Program Evaluator.

II. Program Design and Implementation

YOLO-Tech Training Design: The philosophical underpinning of the program is based on community collaboration, information sharing and joint service planning among a coordinated

team of professionals from social services, mental health, public health, probation, juvenile court system, the health department, and the local Workforce Investment Board. The planning process incorporates not only the specific client needs but also the needs of the family, school's expectations, youth's career goals, and other relevant life objectives. Each plan concentrates on specific problems and possible solutions, and leverages the strengths of the partners and stakeholders. Additionally, the plan considers the family bond or lack of family support, the possibility of incarcerated parents, the neighborhood crime, and the local neighborhood community initiatives for at-risk youth. With the intensive help of a professional case manager, the youth will meet personal, professional, and academic goals during the program phases.

Behavioral Modifications: The integration of behavioral modification is a powerful component, and the program will attempt to protect youth from delinquent labeling and social isolation caused by juvenile justice system involvement. It is designed to holistically assess a juvenile's problems and then provide intensive treatment to the juvenile and his or her family to help transition them out the system. The behavioral modification components are integrated throughout the entire program but are most intensive near the intake/entry point. The program tracks are individualized and enrollment into the program is continuous based on the demands of the court system. As with other youth programs at SLATE, each participant will receive 12 full months of follow up services.

The behavior modification begins immediately and intensely during the first phase of the program, a 12 to 16 week period with a concentrated set of behavioral modification components. The intent is to modify negative behaviors, decrease negative attitudes, enhance academic performance, strengthen families, strengthen respect for the community, increase trust, learn how to effectively process negative emotions, and help students create a more productive outlook on life. During this phase, the introduction of critical soft skills takes place, specifically those

needed to obtain and sustain employment. The following are some of the topics addressed during these sessions: poor grades and school attitude; hanging out with negative peers; disrespectful to teachers and others; poor perception of positive adulthood; time management; family issues and family strengthening sessions. Other topics stressed throughout the reentry program include positive communication practices for the entire family; community service, leadership development; academic and career goals for youth and parents; fighting; gang activity; and how to process and deal with negative emotions and life challenges.

Participant Progress Sharing/Tracking: The case manager will create an individualized program for each participant using the appointment dates set by the court as well as other programmatic milestones needed to help modify and support positive and productive behaviors of the participants. The communication strategy is essential to success of the youth and there will be continuous scheduled communication and intermittent communication with partners, based on the revised communications plan and as needed. Updates to participating partners and key stakeholders will begin at enrollment, weekly with the direct case management team, monthly to the Reentry Taskforce, and at the follow-up phase of the program. All of the information will be shared as well as program progress with the juvenile justice staff on a monthly basis or as needed. In addition to regular weekly updates from case managers, it is planned that an Advisory Council will meet once a quarter to learn about program performance, give expert advice, help overcome any bureaucratic and system road blocks, and help ensure the overall success of the program. SLATE routinely generated participant reports and shares summary information with various public and private partners, in this case Ranken Technical College.

In addition, SLATE has a sophisticated database management system, ToolBox II. The system can track when and how often case managers input case notes, contact youth, provide activities, match career interests with the O-Net codes, how long it has been since a service has

been rendered, and track all referrals made to different locations and agencies. The database is also a valuable tool in the creation of an employment plan, setting appointments, and other documentation. It tracks the results of all assessments including Work Keys, and TABE testing, tracks all barriers to employment, tracks demographic information, obtains parental information, and documents school status, and facilitates continued support through the 12-month follow up period once the youth has reached programmatic outcomes. The system is supported and technical assistance provided by the State of Missouri and the Department of Labor.

Case Management Ratio/Advocacy: The case manager will work along with each participant's legal representative, school counselors, social services case manager, juvenile probation officers, mentors, and family to ensure a holistic advocacy process takes place. With a relatively low case ratio of 1:35, the FT case manager should be able to effectively address the multiple barriers to employment and successful outcomes. Through a close relationship with the Court system, case managers will be able to (re)familiarize themselves with the legal system, will inform the juvenile justice system of progress, and will make sure all program elements are working in the best interest of the youth. The case manager's authentic trusting relationship will facilitate a unique strong bond with the youth and their family.

Participant Access to Counseling: Mental health counseling and drug and alcohol counseling will be essential program elements. When youth are free of depression, anxiety, excessive stress and worry, addictions, and other psychological problems, they are more able to concentrate on their own well-being. Mental health strengthens and supports our ability to: have healthy relationships, make constructive life choices, maintain physical health and well-being, and grow. Many research studies have shown that when people receive appropriate mental health care, their use of medical services declines. Excessive anxiety and stress can contribute to numerous physical problems, reduce the strength of the immune system and increase the

likelihood that participants will make poor behavioral choices. To help address this, SLATE has established a strong relationship with People's Health Clinic, a community partner, and other area agencies to deliver needed no-cost mental health services, increasing participant likelihood of making positive decisions and not being involved with the law again.

Evidence-based Mentoring Strategy: The Case Manager will also facilitate a mentoring component based on six evidence-based standards addressing mentor and mentee recruitment; screening; training; matching; monitoring and support; and closure. Each standard offers benchmarks for day-to-day operations, and they are applicable in stand-alone mentoring programs, as well as programs where mentoring is one element. After the youth successfully completes the behavioral modification component, the program structure infuses leadership development opportunities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors. Youth will receive exposure to postsecondary educational opportunities and community service learning projects. Some of the activities will be peer-centered, including organizational and team leadership training. Others will likely be on a professional basis involving on-site advice from auto repair shops, building managers and IT workers.

Training Leading to Industry-Recognized Credentials: Ranken Technical College (RTC) will serve as the training partner; SLATE and Ranken have already developed a close working relationship and executive leadership attend planning meetings together on a regular basis. Each of RTC's instructional areas is supported by an Advisory Committee; these committees are comprised of more than 160 local and regional industry representatives. Each committee meets bi-annually and reviews curriculum, facilities, equipment and work based learning opportunities relevant to each area of instruction.

Two distinguishing features of the Ranken programs are: a mandatory work ethic component, which results in grades for areas such as appearance, professionalism and team

work; and an emphasis on competency based learning and work-based learning experiences. Ranken’s educational model is validated with a 93% retention rate and placement of 98% of its students in their fields of study within 6 months of graduation. Industry’s enthusiasm for Ranken’s graduates is evidenced by the more than 185 employers who attended our Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 student job fairs. The majority of our instructors come from industry backgrounds, they understand the value of good relationships with area industry partners and employers, and work hard to build and strengthen these relationships.

Ranken will provide coursework, education and training tracks designed to prepare students for potential careers in the IT, Automotive and Building Maintenance fields. The goal of these courses is to prepare participants for entry-level jobs and improves their chances of being hired by preparing them for nationally recognized certification exams in their chosen field. The courses offered by Ranken are outlined in the table below.

Table 1. Technical Courses available through Ranken		
Program Name	Certifications	Course Descriptions/Outcomes
Automotive (120 Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) G1, Auto Maintenance & Light Repair Certificate - ASE Refrigerant Recovery and Recycling Certificate Program - Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program (GVIP) Emission Certificate Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepares students for potential careers in the automotive field. - Provides basic understanding of the functions related to automotive repair - Provides class instruction and hands on shop time. - Prepares participants for Industry-recognized Certification Tests. - Students will be required to complete the GVIP and ASE Refrigerant certification test. - Participants will be registered to take the ASE Certification G1 test.
Information Technology (120 Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CompTIA® A+® Certified Service Technician (Hardware and Micro-Peripherals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepares students for employment as an entry level help desk technician, or as tier 1 support at companies with entry level positions. - Coursework covers the fundamentals of computer technology, installation and configuration of PCs, laptops and related hardware, and basic networking. - Provides training on the skills required to install and configure PC operating systems, and configure common features (e.g. network connectivity and email) for mobile operating systems, Android and Apple iOS.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will be able to build, configure, install, upgrade, repair, troubleshoot, and perform preventative maintenance on computer hardware. - Provides class instruction and hands on shop time. - Students who successfully complete this course will be able to become a CompTIA® A+® Certified Service technician.
Building Maintenance (120 Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Type I EPA Certification (Small appliance with 5 lbs of refrigerant or less) - Type II EPA Certification (Medium, high and very-high pressure appliances) - Type III EPA Certification (Low-Pressure appliances) - Universal EPA Certification (Possesses Type I, Type II, Type III certifications) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides a basic understanding of the functions related to building maintenance. - Prepares students for a potential career in the building maintenance field. - Class instruction and hands on shop time will be provided in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Safety on the worksite (9 hours) -- Anatomy of a residential structure (21 hours) -- Interior trim and finish (12 hours) -- Plumbing essentials (12 hours) -- Electrical essentials (12 hours) -- Cabinet Counter Top installation and repair (9 hours) -- Flooring installation and repair (15 hours) -- HVAC basics (30 hours) - Students will develop skills necessary to pass EPA608 certification tests

Classes will run Monday through Friday for 3 hours - most likely in the afternoons.

Students will be expected to attend all scheduled classes, to arrive on time, and remain for the duration of each class. Students may have up to 4 excused absences at the instructor’s discretion.

Documentation will be required to support excused absences. Fees charged per student will include all books and tools required for the coursework.

To assist its student in securing employment, Ranken conducts bi-annual Job Fairs to assist students in employment/job placement. Fully 185 companies and businesses participated in the Spring 2014 Job Fair. Ranken historically places 98% of its graduates within 6 months of graduation; graduating students are also eligible for lifetime job placement services.

Incentives, Paid Work Experience, and Paid Summer Jobs: The use of incentives, paid work experience, and paid summer jobs is a crucial element of the program; as many of the youth in the target population simply do not have access to parental resources, savings or earnings. Some may even resort back to criminal activity to fulfill their monetary needs. The

YOLO Tech Training program helps legally fulfill the need by offering opportunities for youth to make money and learn job related activities simultaneously. Building in an incentive based element is a researched based practice and considered a national best practice according to OJJDP. Youth will be able to earn incentives through a work experience at employers in each of the focus areas and/or a summer jobs work experience. These real-world experiences will give the youth a chance to sharpen their soft skills, reinforce positive behaviors, conflict mediation skills, judgments skills, respect for authority, and leadership development. All of the skills learned will transfer nicely into the classroom and work settings.

3. Capabilities and Competencies

Management/Staff Structure: The St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE), the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funded American Job Center for the City of St. Louis, will serve as lead agency with overall responsibility for this project. SLATE's Youth Services Department will hire a FT Project Coordinator to oversee all aspects of the YOLO-Ranken partnership component, including reports, data tracking, planning meetings and sustainability. S/he will be helped by a half-time Job Developer from SLATE's Business Services Department, who will ensure all certifications and other qualifications meet the needs of automotive maintenance/repair employers, and maintain/build relationships with relevant businesses and associations. SLATE's Youth Service Manager, responsible for overall supervision and performance of both WIA and SCA funded youth programs, will provide general oversight (approximately 10% of her time).

Capability: SLATE, a unit of the City of St. Louis' local government, has served as a vital resource for workforce development since 1974, when it was known as the Mayor's Office of Manpower Planning. Funded through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) since 1998, SLATE provides services to approximately 20,000 (non-duplicated) job seekers of all categories

(Adult, Dislocated and Youth as well as veterans and incumbent workers) annually. The City of St. Louis Workforce Investment Board (WIB), composed of 35 local business, government and non-profit leaders, works closely with SLATE to develop policy and strategic direction. SLATE currently administers or participates in 4 federal grant-funded projects, overseeing such activities as steering committee facilitation, participant recruitment/outreach and data tracking.

(b) (6), MA, SLATE's Youth Services Manager, has supervised all WIA-funded services to St. Louis City youth for nearly six years. On behalf of the UrbanFORCE summer employment program, she received the Excellence in Customer Service Award from Governor Jay Nixon in 2009, recognizing the fact that the program served more youth in 2009 than any other such program in the state. (b) (6) supervises SLATE's Youth Services Department, consisting of 5 FT staff and which oversees funding of \$1.8 million annually, including subcontracts to a number of community-based vendors/service providers.

SLATE's training partner in the proposed project, Ranken Technical College, is a private, accredited non-profit institution of higher education that has prepared students for a variety of technical fields for over 100 years. Like SLATE, Ranken is devoted to the success of its stakeholders; traditionally 96-98 percent of graduates find gainful employment in their chosen field within six months of graduation. (b) (6), Ranken's Dean of Continuing Education and Workforce Development. (b) (6) currently coordinates workforce training for more than 30 area employers each year, and will serve as Ranken's point of contact for the program. Key instructors will include: (b) (6), Automotive; (b) (6), Information Technology; and (b) (6), Building Maintenance.

As a consequence of previous SCA funding, SLATE has already convened a special Youth Advisory Board consisting of Circuit Attorney Jennifer Joyce, Judge David Mason, Police Chief Sam Dotson and SLATE Executive Director Michael K. Holmes to provide strategic

oversight and to ensure cross-agency collaboration. It is anticipated that they would play an equally vital role in the proposed YOLO - Tech Training project.

(b) (6) will be the lead researcher for evaluating the effectiveness of the project. (b) (6) received his Ph.D. from the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska in 2007 and is currently an associate professor and graduate program director in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Missouri State University. He has two dozen academic publications in a variety of journals.

Project Support and Implementation: SLATE'S Youth Services department has operated summer employment and year-round programs for youth ages 14-18 for decades, with current participation at approximately 500 annually. Many youth program participants have juvenile records in addition to unstable housing, lack of parenting, undiagnosed disabilities, and other challenges. SLATE staff members regularly coordinate with the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Dept. to involve our youth in gang prevention programs such as *Gang Resistance Education and Training* (GREAT) and *Do The Right Thing*, which have proven effective and even resulted in young men and women entering the Police Academy. SLATE can also count on the services of a Fiscal Department, with a Fiscal Manager and five FT staff, to ensure that all financial reports and audits are successfully completed, and a Data Services Manager to provide technical assistance in tracking participant outcomes.

Impact/Outcomes, Evaluation, and Sustainment, and Plan for Collecting Data

In common with other YOLO programs, the proposed activities aims to reduce recidivism in the City of St. Louis by 10% every year, totaling 50% at five years. YOLO-Tech Training will seek 100% participation in paid work experiences of some type; and anticipates that 77% of participants will enter full-time employment. 50% of basic skills deficient

participants will increase at least one educational function level; many participants will also embark on advanced training towards a 2 or 4 year degree, at RTC or elsewhere.

Missouri State University, as the project evaluator, will examine recidivism rates for all program participants. Using a pretest/posttest, single group evaluation design, the evaluator will examine whether self-reported changes occur in attitude and behavior as a result of the program experience. Specifically, attitudes toward work and education will be examined along with self-reported delinquency, and perceptions of job skills acquired through the program. To create equivalent treatment and control groups for analysis purposes, juvenile offenders housed in the detention center first will be assessed for risk and need level through the administration of the above-mentioned YLS/CMI. Youth scoring in the high risk range will become eligible for participation in YOLO Tech Training. Eligible youth will be randomly placed into either a treatment group or a comparison group; statistical procedures such as t-tests and logistic regression will be used to identify whether a statistically significant difference in recidivism is achieved and the extent to which the odds and probabilities of re-confinement differ between the treatment and control groups. A technical report will be written which summarizes the recidivism, attitudinal, and self-reported behavioral outcomes.

SLATE and its partners have fully committed to addressing the root issues of youth delinquency and recidivism in St. Louis City and beyond. Evaluation results and best practices learned will be disseminated to not only our partners but to other WIBs and American Job Centers statewide; SLATE's Executive Director currently chairs the Training and Employment Administrators of Missouri (TEAM) which exists expressly for this purpose. The network of public agencies, trainers, employers and community-based partners as evidenced by YOLO Tech Training will continue to grow as the short and long-term results of the holistic Missouri Model on recidivism prevention and positive behavioral reinforcement become evident.