



# Proposal for Serving Our Streets

Submitted by:  
Lorain County Urban League  
200 Middle Ave Suite 200  
Elyria, OH 44035

## I. Agency Information:

**Agency name, address, telephone number:**

Lorain County Urban League, Inc.  
200 Middle Avenue, Suite 200  
Elyria, OH 44035  
Phone: 440-323-3364

**Contact Person/ Title:** Parris M. Smith/ President and CEO – [psmith@lcul.org](mailto:psmith@lcul.org)

**Federal Tax ID Number:** 34-1263379

**Unique Entity ID (sam.gov):** DRFGWTNDGSB5

**Program/Project Title:** Serving Our Streets (SOS) Initiative

**Location of Proposed/Program Project:** Lorain County Urban League Office (*Address Above*)

**Amount of funds requested for this project:** \$: 100,000

**Amount of Total Project Budget:** \$: 514,000

## II. Organization Narrative:

The Lorain County Urban League (LCUL) is an independent 501(c)(3) agency affiliated with the National Urban League (NUL). NUL was founded in 1910 to assist African-Americans who were migrating from the rural south to the industrial north. Assistance was provided in four program areas, housing, employment, education, and advocacy on securing human rights and civil rights for all disadvantaged groups. The organizational model that the NUL established in New York City attracted attention and soon affiliates were formed in various cities across the country. There are now 90 affiliates of the Nation Urban League in 36 states and in the District of Columbia.

LCUL was founded in 1978; its **mission “is to empower African Americans and all disadvantaged individuals to thrive through direct service, collaboration, and advocacy.”** The strategy we use to pursue the above mission includes:

- Ensuring that children are well-educated and able to participate successfully in the mainstream of society,
- Helping adults attain economic self-sufficiency through continuous education, employment skills training, and good jobs,
- Ensuring that the population we serve has access to fair, decent and affordable housing, and Promoting healthy lifestyles, access to healthcare, and trauma-informed interventions that address the root causes of violence

For over 45 years, LCUL has provided direct services in **four core areas:** education, employment, health, and housing.

Education - We work to develop engaging programs for youth and young adults in our community, to assist them in completing high school and post-secondary education, and to ensure their access to career pathway jobs and internships. Our approach is to serve youth as coaches and mentors, as well as, coordinate college and career exploration and exposure opportunities including workshops, college and company tours, and internships.

Employment - Our Employment Services provide free job skills training, employment referral and career fairs to local residents. Designed to provide low-to-moderate income clients with comprehensive

coaching and guidance to enable them to secure full or part-time jobs. We assist clients with interviewing skills, resume preparation, job search assistance, and post-placement follow-up. The Urban League is also an Entrepreneurship Center. We host the Minority Business Assistance Center (MBAC) which serves the needs of Ohio's small, minority and disadvantaged businesses.

Housing – The Housing Program has provided services for over 30 years. Specific services include Pre – Purchase Homebuyer Counseling, Mortgage Default/Foreclosure Prevention, Post-Purchase Counseling, Rental Counseling, and Financial Education Workshops.

Health – The Urban League promote whole-person wellness. From hosting chronic disease prevention initiatives to launching mental health awareness campaigns like “How I Cope” in partnership with the MHARS Board of Lorain County, LCUL has worked to break the stigma around seeking care—especially within the Black community. Today, we are expanding our health strategy through a bold and necessary initiative: **Serving Our Streets (SOS)**. SOS is guided by the understanding that violence is a public health issue, and as a community, we must confront the growing mental health epidemic tied to violent crime that is harming our youth and young adults.

### III. Project Narrative:

The Urban League respectfully submits this proposal to the City of Lorain for funding support in the amount of **\$100,000** for our **Serving Our Streets (SOS)** initiative. This request aligns directly with the City’s eligible public service categories of **Crime Prevention and Public Safety** and **Youth Services**.

We are seeking this funding to cover critical staff time and program supplies necessary to continue and this high-impact, community-rooted program that addresses youth and young adult violence through a trauma-informed, public health lens.

**Serving Our Streets (SOS)** is a community-based violence interruption and youth engagement initiative led by the Lorain County Urban League. The program was launched in response to the surge in youth-related crime during the COVID-19 pandemic. Modeled after the successful **Cure Violence Global** public health approach, SOS treats violence as a **preventable public health crisis** rather than simply a law enforcement issue.

Our mission is to **reduce youth violence** and increase **opportunities for healing, stability, and reintegration** for high-risk youth in Lorain County. Through **direct engagement, mentorship, mental health support, and wraparound services**, the program offers a holistic alternative to incarceration—empowering young people to build healthy, productive futures.

#### Program Strategy and Key Components

- **Violence Interruption:** SOS employs trained “Violence Interrupters,” individuals with lived experience who are embedded in the community. They identify and engage high-risk youth, mediate conflicts, and intervene before violence occurs.

- **Mental Health as Core Intervention:** Trauma-informed practices and direct mental health support are central to SOS. We address the psychological root causes of violence, such as untreated trauma, grief, and chronic stress.
- **Wraparound Services:** Participants receive individualized support plans, including:
  - Workforce readiness and job placement
  - Educational support and goal setting
  - Resource coordination for basic needs (food, shelter, ID)
  - Access to mentorship and case management
- **Community Engagement:** In partnership with families, schools, courts, parole officers, and community groups, SOS builds a coordinated network of care and accountability.