

# Center for Community Alternatives - Amy DAMico

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## Organization Profile

Organization Name	Mail Address
Center for Community Alternatives	115 E. Jefferson Street, Suite 300, Syracuse, NY 13202

Exec. Name	Contact Name	Phone	Email
David Condliffe	Amy DAMico	315-956-4288	<a href="mailto:adamico@communityalternatives.org">adamico@communityalternatives.org</a>

**Mission/Vision** Mission: The Center for Community Alternatives (CCA) promotes reintegrative justice and a reduced reliance on incarceration through advocacy, services, and public policy development in pursuit of civil and human rights. CCA serves people in difficult situations: youth at risk, families in crisis, people struggling to address substance use disorders, and people living with HIV and AIDS. The individuals served by CCA are among the most impoverished and disempowered in our society. CCA endeavors to address these issues by emphasizing personal empowerment, self-respect, and concern for one's community.

Vision/Principles: Commitment to Public Safety and Accountability, Commitment to individual Care, Commitment to Community, and Commitment to the Field

**Receive County Funds?** YES - We recently received a grant from Monroe County (OCFS funding) to support our Youth Justice Peer Mentor Program (\$68,466). We are not yet under contract. The program will pair a mentor with lived experience and certification as a Peer to work with youth 10–20-year-old youth facing criminal or juvenile delinquency charges, transitioning from juvenile detention secure facilities back to the community, and youth aging out of foster care (18-year-olds). Our referrals will come from attorneys at Legal Aid and the Monroe County Public Defender's Office.

**Div. of Corp. N/A?** no

## Proposal Information

**Project Name** Promoting A Community Transformation: Nonviolence Project (PACT: Nonviolence Project)

**Summary** Promoting A Community Transformation: Nonviolence Project (PACT: Nonviolence Project) focuses on youth age 10-20 at high risk of gun violence or violence victimization and their families in three ways. The project will address gun violence in Monroe County. We request \$3,879,996 over four years to:

- 1) Provide safe housing and social support to families experiencing gun violence;
- 2) Offer Transition Advocacy services for youth facing long-term suspensions in the Rochester City School District, &
- 3) Create a Justice Peer program for court-involved youth that pairs youth with an adult Justice Peer Mentor who has lived experience in the juvenile legal system and has overcome obstacles.

We propose to serve over 400 vulnerable youth and their families annually to advance the Bring Back Monroe goal of Public Health & Public Safety; implementing a long-term framework that supports and recognizes the critical linkages between community wellness, mental health, and public safety. We propose that the PACT: Nonviolence Project will foster safety and encourage positive change through crime prevention and youth programming.

Workforce/Economic?	Health/Safety?	Infrastructure/Sustainability?
no	yes	no

**Description** 1. Advancing Bring Monroe Back goals

The project by Center for Community Alternatives and Rise Up Rochester, Promoting A Community Transformation: Nonviolence Project (PACT: Nonviolence Project) advances Public Health & Public Safety by focusing on youth age 10-20 at high risk of gun violence victimization and their families in three ways:

- 1) Provide safe housing to families experiencing gun violence;
- 2) Offer Transition Advocacy services for youth facing long-term suspensions in the Rochester City School District, and
- 3) Create a Justice Peer program for court-involved youth that pairs them with an adult Justice Peer Mentor who has lived experience in the juvenile legal system and has overcome obstacles.

This project advances Bring Back Monroe goal and conforms with an approved use and population (See Attachment 1, 'Responding to the Public Health Emergency', at c-i; c-ii, c-iv, c-v, d-i and d-ii) with a long-term framework that recognizes the critical linkages between

community wellness, mental health, and public safety.

## 2. Need for ARPA funding and Sustainability after 2026

Because this is a new framework, ARPA funding is needed to initiate the project.

Sustainability will be achieved through private, federal, state, and foundation funding. In the last three years, CCA has increased its budget from 10 to 16 million in revenue in 2022 partly due to our success increasing unrestricted private donations. As an example, the Syracuse Violence Prevention program doubled its funding this year through donations and support of United Way, Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, and others. We have more capacity to obtain funding from private donations than ever, and our 40-member Board regularly commits to support CCA. Federal partnerships have also grown to include partners such as DOJ BJA and the US Department of Labor. We expect to use resource development strategies to sustain this program well after 2026.

## 3. Increasing Accessibility and Eliminating Barriers

All services are free for participants. To minimize barriers to accessing the project we will address the following:

Barrier 1: Lack of Employment – We offer paid positions for youth on the Youth Advisory Board of the PACT: Nonviolence Project in Year One.

Barrier 2: Lack of Income – Stipends for youth participating in the ongoing Youth Advisory Board are provided. Many, if not all, would not be able to participate without being remunerated, due to lack of income for ongoing basic needs. This project pays them for valuable life experience, ensuring lack of income does not prevent youth from participating.

Barrier 3: Transportation/Childcare – Rise Up Rochester and CCA staff meet participants in their homes or community locations to increase accessibility to programmatic services including safe rehousing, transition advocacy, and Justice Peer mentorship.

Barrier 4: Basic Needs/Food Insecurity – Safe housing acknowledges that access to mental and behavioral health programs are possible once the basic need for safe housing has been addressed; and offer families relocation funds, gift cards, and connection to social services benefits (SNAP). Justice Peers will work to connect youth and families to these resources as well.

Barrier 5: Finding our Services – We have partnered with agencies that represent high-risk youth involved in the criminal legal system, to ensure that we reach the hardest to serve.

### d. Goals and Metrics to positively transform our community

CCA tracks demographics, employment status, housing status, connections to behavioral/mental health services, criminal/juvenile justice involvement, education status and advancement, food insecurity, and use of program services (dosage) metrics. We can disaggregate this information by demographic category.

CCA will measure impact by tracking the number of youths engaged in mental health services (numeric metric for the Public Health and Public Safety goal) and track changes in the food insecurity of program participants (equitable metric Public Health and Public Safety goal) in addition to basic demographics and participation data. Additionally, we will track the following:

#### Violence Intervention

#### Rise Up Rochester:

- Provide First Month's Rent to families relocated to safe housing, or host families in hotels while they search for safe housing (15 families, approx. 5 per family or 75 individuals);
  - Provide 3-5 check-ins or dispute resolution engagements to 75 violence victims or family members;
  - Perform follow-up interviews of 15 rehoused families to track if victims avoided further violence;
  - Track # of court appointments (e.g., testify in violence cases) Rise Up assisted to attend.
  - Facilitate 24 LMSW-led support groups for at least 200 violence victims and their families.
- 275 youth or adults served

#### CCA:

#### Transition Advocacy

CCA's will measure how many students with long-term suspensions create a safe-return-to-school plan, how well they achieve their

individualized goals, and track disciplinary outcomes and attendance of youth provided by RCSD. CCA's Transition Advocates will serve up to 120 students annually with 60 active cases at any one point. The maximum active caseload per Transition Advocate will be 30 students. In partnership with RCSD, CCA will seek to improve the attendance records and decrease the disciplinary reports of youth served.

60 youth served

#### Justice Peers & Youth Advisory Board (YAB)

In the Justice Peer design phase, the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) will co-design the activities that Justice Peers will provide to paired youth. Activities they recommend may include, e.g., Justice Peers going to medical appointments with youth, or providing court support. We will track how many youth participated and whether there is a deliverable Justice Peer Model with proposed activities/metrics created by end of Year One.

Justice Peers will be paired with 50 youth annually, once the Justice Peer design phase is complete. Each youth will complete a needs assessment, and the Justice Peers will follow up to determine if individualized needs were met and track progress of youth goals.

70 youth served

Annually, 405 individuals will be served by the PACT: Nonviolence Project.

#### e. Impacting Monroe County residents beyond 2026

The PACT: Nonviolence Project will interrupt generational cycles of violence; offer peer mentors for youth; create opportunities to engage in prosocial activities and reengage with school; and allow youth to positively impact the world they live in, impacting Monroe County residents far beyond 2026.

### ***Company Strengths*** History

Since 1981, CCA's mission is to promote a reduced reliance on incarceration through advocacy, services, and public policy development in pursuit of civil and human rights. CCA has decades of experience serving young people in NYC and Syracuse, where we offer Peer Mentorship and Reentry Programs; Youth Violence Prevention and Peer Leadership, After School Alternatives, and Transition Advocacy services for high-risk, court-involved youth.

In 2009, the You Bet I Told campaign merged with another nonprofit with Baber's Center for Social Change and Economic Development and formed Rise Up Rochester to empower the community to establish and maintain a nonviolent culture.

#### Recognition

CCA has successfully created reentry programs since 1981. Our funders recognize and support our work; including NY DCJS, SAMHSA, and the US Department of Justice. With strong fiscal and administrative supports in place, CCA has grown its budget to over 15 million. Our Performance Quality Improvement (PQI) department ensures excellence in reporting and fidelity to program models. Our recent audited financial report had zero findings.

Wanda Ridgeway, Rise Up Rochester's Director, is a recipient of President Barack Obama's Lifetime Achievement Award; the Terry Melvin Special Recognition Award for the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; a proclamation from Monroe County Executive Cheryl Dinolfo; and the 2020 recipient of the ESL Centennial Award.

#### Partnerships

Partners in Rochester include: Rise Up Rochester, RAWNY, Legal Aid Society, the Monroe County Public Defender's Office, LAWNY, JPC, and the Rochester City School District.

#### Awareness of services in the community

CCA is known for its CORE Center in Rochester, which provides peer-driven recovery services to court-involved individuals. Our Reentry Advocacy services are expanding in Rochester alongside our partners LAWNY and JPC.

Rise Up Rochester is well known in Rochester for its work responding to gun violence and a member of the ROC Against Violence Coalition.

## **Community Resources** a. Partnerships and Collaborations

Our collaboration with the Monroe County Public Defender's Office and Legal Aid Society leverage the project as referral sources for high-risk youth who will be part of the PACT: Nonviolence Project. CCA also leverages the project with the other services we have available, including our on-site CORE Recovery Center, a peer-led, peer-driven hub of recovery from substance use disorders, which anyone with substance use disorder may attend for groups and services offered. We also provide reentry advocacy, which assists participants to obtain, review, and correct RAP sheets, and where possible to receive expungements/sealing and Certificates of Rehabilitation. All youth in the PACT: Nonviolence Project can access these services through CCA or one of our partner organizations, LAWNY and Judicial Process Center.

### a. Proposed Partnerships and Collaborations including MWBE

- Rise Up Rochester, Inc. (not yet MWBE; 100% directed and staffed by persons of color)
- Rochester City School District
- Legal Aid Society (Family Court defense counsel for juveniles)
- Monroe County Public Defender's Office
- Reentry Advocacy of Western NY (including LAWNY and Judicial Process Center)

### b. Relationship Between Proposed Partners

We have sought to partner with Rise Up Rochester before, to support that program with organizational and technical support, because their work is aligned closely with our mission and values. Rise Up Rochester, while not a certified MWBE, is led by a Black woman and is fully staffed by Black and Hispanic outreach specialists. Coordinated Care Services, Inc. (CCSI) is the fiscal sponsor of Rise Up Rochester, and CCA works collaboratively with them.

We are also part of RAWNY (Reentry Advocacy of Western NY), a HUB of all significant service providers working in the reentry arena. We have a collaborative working partnership with organizations providing reentry advocacy (LAWNY, JPC, the Reentry Community Development Center and the Monroe County Public Defender's Office).

We have robust partnerships with Legal Aid Society and the Monroe County Public Defender's Office, our partners for the PACT: Nonviolence Project for referrals into the project. Through our collaboration providing reentry advocacy and mitigation reports to defense counsel for those offices, we have developed coordinated efforts to better serve Monroe County's most disenfranchised and historically marginalized persons with criminal legal system involvement who are poor and disproportionately persons of color.

### c. Financial and/or in-kind resources supporting the PACT: Nonviolence Project

Monroe County Youth Bureau \$68,466 (renewable)

Greater Rochester Health Foundation \$88,450 (one-time, pending award)

Monroe County in-kind office space and telecommunications at 244 S Plymouth Ave, Rochester, NY; estimated value \$36,000/year

The two grants supporting the project total \$156,916, and the in-kind match is estimated at \$36,000.

**Audience** PACT: Nonviolence Project will serve 405 people (youth and adults) who are at high risk of violence victimization or perpetration. They are underrepresented, often a minority population, and extremely vulnerable to further incidents of violence. Rise Up Rochester targets families impacted by gun violence, mediating disputes, providing support, and relocating families who are not safe where they live. Rise Up Rochester has been active in the community since 2004. Rise Up Rochester initiates engagement with survivors of gun violence and is part of ROC Against Violence Coalition. CCA and will target and engage high-risk youth through Rise Up Rochester referral, and from referrals from the Monroe County Public Defender's Office, Legal Aid Society, and Rochester City School District.

a. Target Population: historically underrepresented, a minority population, vulnerable, and generally underserved in Monroe County.

The population served is families with a need for safe housing relocation due to gun violence, and/or youth who have juvenile court involvement, and/or who face long-term suspensions from school. The cohort are at high risk of violence either as alleged perpetrators or as victims of gun violence. They are disproportionately persons of color, vulnerable to re-victimization, and lack support services including in the healthcare and education systems; and are historically underrepresented. Youth will skew to Black and Hispanic participants (aged 10-20) for three reasons:

1. the criminal legal system disproportionately affects Black and Hispanic youth;
2. gun violence victims are significantly likely to be Black in the City of Rochester; and
3. youth facing long term suspensions are disproportionately people of color.

b. Associated costs, fees, or other obligations to participate that will be asked of the targeted individual(s) or community

There are no costs or other obligations to youth to participate.

<i>Cost 1st Year</i>	<i>Cost All Years</i>	<i>Residents 1st Year</i>	<i>Residents All Years</i>	<i>FT Employees</i>	<i>PT Employees</i>
\$829,366.00	\$3,879,996.00	405	1,620	7	3
<b>Volunteers</b>					
10					

**Staffing** Rise Up Rochester:

- Supervisor of Safe Housing Project Lead (CCSI (fiscal sponsor for Rise Up Rochester) (.20 FTE)
- Safe Housing Director: (1 FTE) 18 years' experience supporting gun violence survivors and directing Rise Up Rochester, Inc.
- Case Manager/Outreach Workers (2 FTE): Credible members of the community with experience in violence interruption.
- (3) per diem staff: Engage victim families and assist with outreach and relocations; 9 hours each, per week.
- Assistant to the Director: Excellent communication skills, highly organized (1 FTE)

Center for Community Alternatives (CCA):

- Project Supervision of CCA Youth Services (Kimber Gunn) (.30 FTE) Bachelor's Degree, 10+ years' experience as Youth Services Director in Syracuse, NY overseeing Transition Advocacy and Afterschool Violence Prevention programs.
- Project Director (1 FTE) Bachelor's Degree in youth services field preferred, Peer Certification within six months. Experience managing staff. Lived criminal legal-involved experience.
- Justice Peers (2 FTE) Must be NYS Certified Peer within first 6 months of employment. Willingness to seek additional accreditation as a "Justice Peer." Must have overcome criminal legal system involvement.
- Co-Design Youth Advisory Board Facilitator: Lived experience in criminal legal system required, strong leadership, facilitation, and communication skills. Degree in youth or human services preferred.
- Transition Advocate (2 FTE). Bachelor's Degree in Youth Programming or Human Services or Communication field required.
- Data Analyst for Performance Quality Improvement (.20 FTE) to ensure output and outcome performance measures are tracked and achieved.
- Finance Analyst (.20 FTE)
- Administrative Assistant (.10 FTE)