



## College Completion Innovation Fund

2018 Grantmaking Cycle

**Full Proposal Deadline:** April 13, 2018 (by invitation only)

**Notification of Award:** May 2018

Submit full proposals to: [CCIFsubmissions@gmail.com](mailto:CCIFsubmissions@gmail.com).

Graduate NYC's (GNYC) College Completion Innovation Fund (CCIF) aims to generate significant increases in college graduation rates in New York City by harnessing the collective expertise and impact of a wide range of philanthropic and education organizations. The CCIF makes grants to support undergraduate colleges and nonprofit community-based organizations (CBOs) in implementing innovative programs that address the graduation challenges faced by low-income students, first-generation college goers, students of color, and others who are traditionally underrepresented among college degree holders. In addition to its role in catalyzing innovation and expanding successful practices, the CCIF provides professional development and project assistance to its grantees and facilitates ongoing dialogue related to increasing degree attainment in New York City.

Investors in 2018 Grantmaking Cycle include: Capital One Bank, the Teagle Foundation, the Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation, the Altman Foundation, the Jeffrey H. and Shari L. Aronson Family Foundation, the ECMC Foundation, the Solon E. Summerfield Foundation and the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity. New York City's major public education institutions—the New York City Department of Education, The City University of New York, and City Hall's Office for Strategic Policy Initiatives—also participate in the CCIF Advisory Board.

### **Investing in Innovation Through Professional Development and Grantmaking**

To help build capacity and foster greater innovation among education and nonprofit organizations, the CCIF is sponsoring a two-step grantmaking process began in winter 2018.

During the initial stage, staff members from 22 organizations had the opportunity to participate in the Completion Innovation Lab, led by [ImpactLab](#), experts in design thinking<sup>1</sup> approaches to problem solving. After participating in the one-and-a-half-day lab, organizations are invited to develop and submit a full proposal, and are encouraged to participate in a follow-up coaching session with an Impact Lab coach during the proposal development process.

After a review of full proposals, the CCIF intends to invest in at least three innovative solutions. Organizations may request grants from \$75,000 to \$300,000, to support work over the course of one, two or three years. The CCIF expects grantees to participate in additional convenings, leveraging these opportunities to collaborate and learn from others as well as to make project improvements over the course of the grant period and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> Design thinking and other methods introduced in this workshop help problem-solvers think in new ways and turn their insights into sustainable solutions (i.e., new programs) for their constituents.

### **Projects Eligible for CCIF Funding:**

The Completion Innovation Lab supports institutions and organizations in developing innovative project proposals to address issues of completion by significantly improving student outcomes in one of the following categories described below:

- (1) Improving Transfer Student Success;
  - a. Strengthening the two- to four-year college transfer pipeline
  - b. Improving persistence rates of transfer students
  
- (2) Increasing Momentum and Persistence:
  - a. Improving persistence rates for students beyond their freshman year, especially the “murky middle” (the large population of students who drop out after their freshman year with GPAs between a 2.0 and 3.0)
  - b. Identifying critical points where students are most at risk of dropping out and engaging those students to stay in college (FAFSA renewal, winter and summer breaks, nearing graduation)
  - c. Programs that help increase students’ yearly credit accumulation (students who earn 30 credits per year are more likely to graduate on time and more likely to earn a degree overall)

The CCIF seeks to foster and support innovation in the college success sector. The following are some of the types of proposals the CCIF will consider:

- Proposals that intend to test out concepts or approaches that have not been previously attempted in the college success sector.
- Proposals that introduce a new strategy or model to the field, or substantially alter and build upon a current practice connected to college persistence and completion.
- Proposals that adapt concepts from other geographic locations or contexts and apply those in a locally-adaptable form.
- Proposals that borrow successful approaches, models, and/or practices from other industries in order to leverage these ideas within the college completion space. (John Raymond from ImpactLab referred to this as the process of considering analogous scenarios.)

The CCIF is amenable to other definitions of innovation as long as the solution proposed is not an established or widely implemented practice in New York City.

All proposals must describe a theory of change, or provide proof of concept if they are premised on a model from another geography or context.

A majority of those served by eligible projects must be low-income students, first-generation college students, students of color, or others who are traditionally underrepresented among college degree holders. Organizations must have a demonstrated record of tracking and using data to inform programming, and the staff capacity to carry out the proposed project. Grantees must have a 501(c)(3) designation.

## Timeline

Following participation in the Lab, GNYC invites organizations to submit a grant proposal, the deadline for which is April 13. GNYC will notify applicants of CCIF grant awards in May 2018, and funded projects are expected to launch in September 2018.

## Available Funds

Awards will be made in amounts from \$75,000 to \$300,000 (total project budget) for one, two, or three-year projects. The CCIF seeks diversity in size and scope of grant proposals to optimize overall impact, and will likely fund projects in the \$75,000 - \$150,000 range. Initially, all contracts will be nonrenewable. Funding is subject to:

- Availability
- Grantee compliance with state and federal requirements
- Demonstration of effectiveness and/or quality of implementation
- Accurate documentation and budgeting
- Timely reporting on program and budget
- A scheduled start date of academic year 2018-2019

## Student Numbers and Costs

To be eligible, a proposed solution must serve **at least 60 students in the first year of implementation.**

The CCIF seeks solutions that are scalable and replicable, and the cost of creating successful outcomes for students will be one criterion that will be considered as part of the review process.

## Budget Details

Project budgets should include a narrative for each budget category. The budget narrative does not contribute to the overall page limit. Applicants should include the basis for estimating the cost of project expenditures and how costs relate to proposed activities and services.

Project budgets **should** include the following:

- A total project cost and the amount requested from the CCIF. If those amounts are different, include a listing of the anticipated revenue sources that will cover the rest of the funding for the project, and the status of that funding (prospect/pending/secured).
- A clear distinction between personnel and non-personnel expenses.
- The names and titles of the employees whose salaries are included in personnel costs, and the percentage of their salaries that is allocated. Please be sure to also list any temporary staff or consultants that would need to be hired in order for the project to be implemented.
- An allocation for project evaluation.
- An allocation for project planning (if necessary).
- If the applicant organization is a college, an allocation of up to 7% of the total budget for indirect costs.

Project budgets **should not** include the following

- An allocation for student scholarships. A small amount designated towards student stipends or MetroCards is allowed.
- An "other" or miscellaneous category with a substantial amount of money allocated to it (this should not exceed 5% of the total budget).

Applicants may use the budget template provided. Applicants not using the budget template must ensure that their budget submissions include at least the same level of detail as the template.

### **Proposal Submission**

Full proposals are due **by 11:59 PM EST on April 13, 2018**. The application and all required attachments should be emailed in a **single PDF** to [CCIFsubmissions@gmail.com](mailto:CCIFsubmissions@gmail.com). Incomplete or late proposals may not be considered.

You will receive confirmation of receipt after submitting your proposal. If you do not receive confirmation, please contact GNYC Project Manager, Alex Roland at (718) 254-7714.

### **Review Process**

Proposals will be reviewed by GNYC staff for completeness and compliance with grant guidelines and eligibility requirements. Some applicant organizations may receive follow-up questions from GNYC staff. If a proposal is late, incomplete or was unsolicited, the proposal may be eliminated from consideration. The CCIF Advisory Board will review all eligible applications to determine the proposals selected for funding.

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Submission follows all given guidelines (page limits, all questions answered, all attachments provided)
- Proposed solution clearly addresses grant categories and goals, and provides a case for why the idea is innovative
- Organization has proven track record of leading work in college readiness, access, retention, and/or success
- Proposed solution has a clear theory of change and/or a research base indicating potential success
- Proposed solution has the potential to be scaled, sustained, and replicated either within the organization and/or across other organizations or institutions
- Priority will be given to those that have the biggest impact per grant dollar awarded

The CCIF Advisory Board acknowledges that the path to innovation involves the risk that some solutions ultimately will not be successful. It seeks for the CCIF grantees and the field as a whole to learn from these efforts and expand the range of knowledge that future solutions can draw upon.

### **Notification of Award**

The primary contact person from each applicant organization will be notified of full proposal status in May 2018. The contract period for funded projects will begin on July 15, 2018, unless there is an approved alteration.

### **Reporting Requirements**

Each grantee will be required to submit brief interim (six-month) reports and more comprehensive annual and final reports. Grantees will also be in regular communication with GNYC and will interact periodically with other CCIF-funded projects.



### [CCIF 2018 Full Proposal](#)

*The proposal narrative, **excluding attachments**, should be no more than eight pages (single-spaced, 11-point font and 1" margins). Attachments should be created in the applicant's preferred format. Applications must include the standardized coversheet, which does not contribute to the eight-page limit. Submissions should be emailed in a **single PDF document** to the attention of Melissa Herman, Innovation Fund Director at [CCIFsubmissions@gmail.com](mailto:CCIFsubmissions@gmail.com). If you do not receive a confirmation email, please resubmit your proposal or contact GNYC Project Manager, Alex Roland at (718) 254-7714.*

#### **Proposed Project**

1. What is the problem statement you developed either during or after participating in the Completion Innovation Lab?
2. Describe the target population to be served (demographics/demonstrated need for service, estimated percentage of low-income students to be served, and how this percentage was calculated; e.g., Pell eligibility or percentage of undocumented students).
3. How is your target population involved in informing this work? Please describe any user testing you were able to conduct as part of developing your solution (if applicable).
4. How many students and college campuses will be served by this project?
5. Describe the solution you will implement with CCIF support.
6. What is the theory of change or evidence base that suggests this solution could be successful?
7. What is innovative about this solution? Is this concept being applied in other locations? If so, what would be different or improved about your implementation?
8. What specifically will you learn from piloting this solution (whether or not it has the impact that was initially intended)? How do you envision this learning will contribute to the field?
9. What are your outcome goals for this project and how will you track them? Do you currently track these indicators?
10. Indicate the category for which you are applying and amount of funds requested.
11. Describe the current partnerships and collaborations that support your work. Please describe any new partnerships that will result from this project (if applicable).
12. Describe in a paragraph your organization's capacity (human and financial resources) and expertise to take on the described project.
13. How will this project, if successful, be sustained beyond the grant period?

14. What might a successful scale up of this idea entail? What about the solution (e.g. cost, structure, ease of adaptability etc.) would make it scalable, either within your organization or at other institutions?

#### **Attachments**

- Proposal coversheet
- Any visual aid developed during the lab or after that aids in understanding your problem and/or solution (optional)
- Organization budget for current fiscal year and projected budget for project implementation years (revenue/expense)
- Project budget and budget narrative
- Timeline of project activities
- Key staff bios (one paragraph for each staff member)
- 501(c)(3) determination letter
- Most recent audited financial statements
- List of board of directors
- Letter of support from project partners (if applicable)



College Completion Innovation Fund  
Proposal Coversheet

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Title of Project:

Contact person's name, phone, title and email:

\_\_\_\_\_

Suggested Duration of Project:

- One Year
- Two Years
- Three Years

Requested Budget Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Percentage of project budget requested from CCIF (up to 100%): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Projected Number of Students Served: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Year 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Funding Category:

- Momentum and Persistence
- Two- to Four-Year Transfer

Key Project Targets: (e.g., number of students expected to persist into sophomore year, or semester-to-semester persistence of transfer student group)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Brief Project Description (Including your problem statement; in 400 words or fewer)



**College Completion Innovation Fund  
Budget Template**

Please use this worksheet as a guide for submitting your proposed project budget. You may add additional rows and budgeted line items as necessary, but please try to use the suggested categories where applicable. It is possible that you may wish to leave some categories blank.

Expenses	Planning	Year 1	Year 2 (if applicable)	Year 3 (if applicable)	Total	Notes
<b>Personnel</b>						
e.g., Program Director						
e.g., Program Staff						
e.g., Consultants						
<b>Non-Personnel</b>						
Materials and Supplies						
Events						
Travel and Transportation						
Evaluation and Assessment						
Student Stipends/MetroCards						
<b>Total requested from CCIF</b>						
Total required for project (if different than above)						

Other sources of funding: (marked as prospect, pending, or secured)