



**College Completion Innovation Fund
Request for Proposals – Round Two**

- RFP and Application Released:** **October 1, 2015**
- Pre-Approval Submission Deadline:** **October 28, 2015**
- Grant Application Deadline:** **December 13, 2015 (for approved, eligible projects only)**
- Notification of Award:** **March 2016**

[Submit all proposals to CCIFsubmissions@gradnyc.org](mailto:CCIFsubmissions@gradnyc.org)

Graduate NYC’s College Completion Innovation Fund is investing over \$1 million in innovations that improve college retention and completion rates in New York City. Current investors of the Fund include: The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, the Heckscher Foundation, Capital One Bank, the Teagle Foundation, the Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation, Inc., the Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation, and the Jewish Foundation for Education of Women. Grants are made to support undergraduate colleges and non-profit community-based organizations (CBOs) that serve low-income students, first-generation college-goers, and students of color in the five boroughs. In addition to its role in catalyzing innovation within the college completion space and expanding successful practices and policies, the Fund will facilitate ongoing dialogue and engagement related to increasing degree attainment in New York City.

College Completion Innovation Fund Goals

- Provide support for an array of projects that increase college persistence and completion rates by either testing new models or by adapting promising or proven practices from other geographies/contexts and bringing them to NYC.
- Facilitate dialogue and increase learning about effective practices that improve college graduation rates.
- Draw attention to issues related to college persistence and completion, and generate interest among funders both within this space and outside of it.
- Create incentives for policy and practice changes to achieve a more rapid acceleration of efforts in increasing college retention.
- Share research and document local successes.
- Encourage greater collaboration among and between colleges and community-based organizations.
- Increase citywide awareness of the steps needed to prepare for, enroll in and complete college successfully.

Eligibility

The College Completion Innovation Fund (CCIF) will award grants to support new projects that aim to significantly improve student outcomes in one or more of three categories: (1) remediation, (2) college persistence, and (3) two-year to four-year college transfers. Eligible entities include New York City-based undergraduate colleges (public or non-profit) and CBOs. A majority of students served by eligible projects will be low-income students and all projects will serve low-income students, first-generation college-students, students of color and/or others who are traditionally underrepresented among college degree holders. Preference will be given to projects that utilize technology and/or cross-sector partnerships to achieve scale. Organizations must have a minimum of three years of experience implementing college access, retention, and/or success work for low-income students. Eligible CBOs should have a documented partnership with one or more New York City-based undergraduate colleges, or must demonstrate the ability to develop a partnership as part of the proposed project. Organizations must have a demonstrated record of tracking and using data to inform programming, and demonstrated staff capacity to carry out the proposed project.

Organizations that submitted a proposal in Round One cannot submit the same proposal in Round Two, and will be required to answer questions in the Round Two application describing the differences between their two submissions. Grantees must have a 501(c)3 designation.

Available Funds

This is the second opportunity to apply for funding through the College Completion Innovation Fund. Pending availability of additional funds, funding rounds may continue. A one-page **project pre-proposal submission will be due on October 28, 2015** and is required for pre-approval before submission of a full proposal. Applicant colleges and CBOs will be notified on November 9th of their eligibility to move forward in the process. Eligible entries will be asked to submit a **full proposal, which will be due on December 13, 2015**. Nearly \$500,000 was committed to projects through Round One and more than \$600,000 will be committed to projects through the second round RFP. Awards will be made in amounts from \$30,000 to \$300,000 total project budget for one, two, or three-year projects. The Fund seeks diversity in size and scope of grant proposals to optimize overall impact, and likely will fund projects in the \$30,000 - \$150,000 range. Initially, all contracts will be non-renewable. 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

Grant Types & Categories

Two types of grants will be made for projects addressing one or more of the following categories below.

- **Type I: Innovation Grants** will be made for projects that appear to be truly innovative and would test out concepts or approaches that have not been tried before in the college completion space. These projects could introduce a new strategy or model to the field or substantially alter

and innovate a current practice connected to college persistence and completion. Projects are encouraged to engage cross-institutional/cross-sector partners and/or incorporate technology solutions to achieve a level of scale. While no evidence of prior success is needed, these projects must be able to explain their theory of change and provide a compelling case that the project could lead to successful outcomes. **Innovation Grants will receive priority in the evaluation process, however, the CCIF desires to fund projects in both categories.**

- **Type II: Replication Grants** will be made to projects that are new to the applicant organization, are being adapted from another geography or context, and are not established or widely implemented practice in NYC. We also encourage innovation through technology and/or partnerships, especially as a means for creating scalable solutions. These projects should have some proof of concept, have worked in another context, and have some data or evidence that they may be successful in the proposed project. Organizations applying for Replications Grants will also be asked to explain why the concept is worthwhile to replicate.

All Type I and Type II grants should be designed to address one or more of the following categories:

- **Remediation:** The CCIF seeks projects that aim to increase student success in entry-level credit-bearing college courses by providing students with alternatives to remediation and/or opportunities to accelerate progress through remedial coursework.
- **Persistence:** The CCIF seeks projects designed to increase college degree completion rates by significantly improving credit accumulation, momentum, and year-to-year persistence.
- **Two-Year to Four-Year Transfers:** The CCIF seeks projects designed to help students successfully transfer from two-year (associate degree) programs to four-year (baccalaureate degree) programs. The purpose of these grants is to increase associate degree completion prior to transfer and/or increase transfer students' success in four-year institutions.

All projects will be required to establish appropriate targets for persistence and completion measures. Round Two projects will begin in academic year 2016-2017.

Student Numbers and Costs

To be eligible, a project must serve a minimum number of 60 students per intervention per year that the project is funded. Larger projects are desirable as well.

Projects will be evaluated based on their cost per student served. The Fund is looking for solutions that are scalable and replicable, and the cost per student served will be one metric that is evaluated 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 budget should include the following:

- Project total costs and the amount requested from the Fund. 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).
- Budgets should provide a clear division between personnel and non-personnel expenses.
- Personnel costs should state the names and titles of the employees whose salaries are included and the percentage of their salary that is allocated. Make sure to also list any temporary staff or consultants that would need to be hired in order for the project to be implemented.
- A percentage of the budget should be allocated to evaluation. (Grants of \$100,000 or more should include a more robust evaluation plan, e.g. at least 10% of total project budget.)
- A portion of the grant can be used for planning purposes.
- Colleges can allocate up to 7% of the total budget to indirect costs.
- The budget should **not** include money allocated toward student scholarships. A small amount designated towards student stipends or MetroCards is allowed.
- Do **not** include an “other” or miscellaneous category with a substantial amount of money allocated in that category. (Should not exceed 5% of total budget.)

You can use the budget template provided for your submission. If you do not use the budget template, please ensure that your budget includes at least the same level of detail as the template.

Questions

Please address all questions on the proposal process, eligibility, and projects to **Melissa Herman, GNYC Project Manager for the Fund** at CCIFquestions@gradnyc.org. Questions will be answered directly and posted in the [FAQ section](#) of the CCIF webpage. The deadline for submitting questions is **December 1st**. We will also host a **webinar on October 8th at 11:00 A.M.**, which will be recorded and available on the website.

Proposal Submission

Pre-approval

Applicants must receive pre-approval by submitting the one-page project form, which can be found [here](#). Forms must be received **by 11:59 PM EST on October 28, 2015** and organizations will receive notification as to whether the proposed project is eligible for the full proposal process on **November 9th**.

Full Proposal Submission

Approved full proposals are due **by 11:59 PM EST on December 13, 2015** and should include all required attachments in a **single PDF attachment** addressed to Lisa Castillo Richmond, Executive Director, Graduate NYC at CCIFsubmissions@gradnyc.org. Incomplete or late proposals will not be considered.

For both pre-approval submissions and full proposals, you will receive confirmation of receipt. If you do not receive confirmation, please contact Melissa Herman at (718) 254-7782 or CCIFquestions@gradnyc.org.

Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed by Graduate NYC staff for completeness and compliance with grant guidelines and eligibility requirements. Some applicant organizations may receive follow-up questions from the Graduate NYC staff. If a proposal is late, incomplete or pre-approval wasn't given, the proposal may be eliminated from consideration. This decision will be final and applicant organizations will be notified in writing.

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)
- Project clearly addresses one or more grant categories
- Organization has proven track record of leading work in college readiness, access, retention, and/or success
- Project has either a clear theory of change (Type I), or some proof of concept and research base indicating it may be successful (Type II)
- Ideas have the potential to be scaled, sustained and replicated across other organizations or institutions
- For CBOs, priority will be given to those who have secured a higher education partner
- Priority will be given to projects that have the biggest impact per grant dollar awarded
- Priority will be given to projects that utilize technology in new or innovative ways, particularly if they aid in scalability

Notification of Award

The primary contact from the applicant organization will be notified of the full proposal status in March 2016. The contract period for funded projects will begin on July 15, 2016, 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 Graduate NYC and will interact periodically with other CCIF-funded projects.

CCIF Round Two Application

*Your proposal narrative, **excluding attachments**, should be no more than eight pages (single-spaced, 11 point font and 1" margins). Create attachments in your preferred format. Applications will also need to include the standardized coversheet, which does not contribute to the eight page limit. Organizations that applied in Round One and are re-applying with a new project also should complete the additional question (Question 18). Proposals that exceed eight pages will not be considered. Your submission should be sent in a **single PDF document** to the attention of Lisa Castillo Richmond, Executive Director, Graduate NYC, at CCIFsubmissions@gradnyc.org. If you do not receive a confirmation receipt, please re-submit your proposal or contact Melissa Herman at 718-254-7782 or CCIFquestions@gradnyc.org.*

General Overview

For Community-Based Organizations

1. Overview of organization.
2. Describe your current college access and success work, its history, and outcomes.
3. What are your organizational goals and what college access and success indicators does your organization track?
4. Describe the current partnerships and collaborations that support your work.

For Colleges

1. Overview of college (total enrollment, student demographics, including % from low-income households, organization strengths related to the proposed project). Please provide the most recent completion rates (community colleges: provide 3-year and 4-year completion rates; four-year colleges: provide 5-year and 6-year completion rates).
2. Describe any significant efforts aimed at improving retention and completion rates at your institution and provide a summary of their outcomes. What progress do you intend to make on these with the proposed project?
3. What department or division of the college will manage this project?
4. Describe the current partnerships and collaborations that support your work.

Proposed Project

5. Indicate grant type and category for which you are applying.
6. Amount of funds requested.
7. How many students and college campuses will be involved in/served through this project?
8. Describe the target population to be served (demographics/demonstrated need for service, estimate % of low-income students to be served and how you calculated this % [e.g., Pell eligible, undocumented %, etc.]).
9. Describe the project you will implement with CCIF support.
10. **Type I**, what is innovative about this project? Is this concept being carried out in other places? If so, what would be different or improved about your implementation? **Type II**, why is this concept worth replicating? What would be different or improved about your implementation?
11. How will your project address equity gaps and increase diversity within higher education?
12. For **Type I** projects, what is the theory of change upon which your project is based? For **Type II** projects, do you have evidence that this project could work? Please provide a brief description.

13. What are your outcome goals for this project and how will you track them? Do you currently track these indicators?
14. Please describe any new partnerships that will result from this project.
15. How is your target population involved in informing your work as an organization?
16. Provide a detailed narrative of your organization's capacity (human and financial resources) and expertise to take on the described project.
17. How will this project, if successful, be sustained beyond the grant period? How do you envision building upon it? What might a successful scale-up of this program entail? If possible, describe potential economies of scale that might occur if the project were to be expanded in the future.

Additional required question for re-submitting organizations (not included in the eight page limit)

18. Please describe the key differences between the previously submitted project and the new project. Where possible, highlight how the new project speaks to one or more of the following: scalability and replicability in various settings; partnerships among and between colleges and CBOs; use of technology as part of a scalable solution; and/or cost per student or cost per successful outcome.

Attachments

- Round Two Proposal Coversheet
- Organization budget for current year and projected for project years (revenue/expense)
- Project budget and budget narrative
- Timeline of project activities
- Key staff bios (single paragraph for each)
- 501c3 status document
- Most recent audited financial statements
- List of Board of Directors
- Letter of support from project partners (if applicable and if not submitting a joint proposal with a partner organization)



**College Completion Innovation Fund
Round Two Proposal Coversheet**

Organization Name: _____ Title of Project: _____

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

Type I Innovation or Type II Replication: _____

Suggested Period of Performance:

- One Year
- Two Years
- Three Years

Requested Budget Total: _____

Year 1: _____

Year 2: _____

Year 3: _____

Percent of project budget requested from CCIF (up to 100%): _____

Total Projected Number of Students Served: _____

Year 1: _____

Year 2: _____

Year 3: _____

Cost per Student Served per year (Requested budget for the year divided by the projected number of students served for that same year)

Year 1: _____

Year 2: _____

Year 3: _____

Funding Category:

- Remediation
- College Persistence
- Two-Year to Four-Year Transfer

Key Project Targets: (e.g., percent of students expected to exit remediation, number of students expected to persist into sophomore year, etc.)

Brief Project Description (250 words or less)



**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's possible that you may wish to leave some categories blank.

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

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