



COMPREHENSIVE COUNSELING INITIATIVE FOR INDIANA K-12 STUDENTS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Lilly Endowment views education at all levels as indispensable to personal, civic, and economic well-being and success and also believes that Indiana must have the skilled workforce and intellectual capital that are essential for the state and its residents to prosper. Accordingly, the Endowment funds efforts to: 1) strengthen educational institutions and youth-serving nonprofit organizations; 2) enhance the effectiveness and morale of teachers, professors, school leaders and counselors; 3) provide resources for students to succeed across the P-16 continuum and in their pursuit of career success; and 4) engage community partners in the development of promising programs and initiatives that enhance the quality of life in Indiana and make it a place that businesses and their employees want to call home.

The Endowment believes that effective counseling programs in Indiana's K-12 schools can further these aims and enhance the impact of these efforts. It therefore offers this new counseling initiative, the Comprehensive Counseling Initiative for Indiana K-12 Students (Counseling Initiative), through which public school corporations and charter schools can apply for funding to enhance the quality and expand the scope of the counseling they provide their students.

Background

More than 20 years ago the Endowment commissioned a study, coordinated and disseminated by the Indiana Youth Institute (IYI), called *High Hopes, Long Odds*. The study, prepared with the assistance of scholars from the University of Chicago and Harvard University, found significant disparities between the career aspirations of Indiana's middle school students and the students' and their parents' understanding of the steps that needed to be taken for the students to achieve those aspirations. The study highlighted the important role effective school counseling could play in addressing these disparities but noted that often counselors were too busy to provide adequate attention to those issues. While there have been some improvements in counseling around the state since *High Hopes, Long Odds* was released, significant challenges regarding the scale and quality of counseling in Indiana's K-12 schools persist. According to the most recent survey data available (2010-2011) from the National Association of College Admission Counseling, Indiana ranked 45th out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia in the number of K-12 students per counselor with an average of one counselor for every 620 students. The

American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of one counselor for every 250 students.

The need to improve and expand counseling in Indiana schools was affirmed in a 2014 study supported by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce Foundation (Chamber Foundation) entitled *Indiana School Counseling Research Review*. That study noted that counselors have limited professional development opportunities related to college and career counseling and reported that counselors are increasingly confronted with competing demands to allocate more time to the social and emotional needs of students, academic counseling, and a variety of non-counseling administrative duties (e.g., administering state assessments, Advanced Placement exams and other tests), leaving a shortage of time for college and career readiness counseling. Many counselors also are asked to monitor and help students comply with changing state requirements for graduation, including assisting students in developing individual graduation plans beginning in the sixth grade. Moreover, counselors often are responsible for helping 21st Century Scholars fulfill the Scholar Success Program requirements to qualify for this important state aid and, as of September 2016, only 32 percent of the class of 2017 eligible Scholars have met the requirements to earn their scholarship, meaning that counselors must give even more attention to these students.

Besides academic challenges, Indiana students also have critical social and emotional needs. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *2016 Kids Count Profile*, Indiana ranks 30th overall relating to the well-being of children and youth. In its April 2014 *Issue Brief*, IYI reported that in a national survey of 43 states, Indiana ranked first in the percentage of teenagers who have had thoughts of suicide and second in the percentage who have attempted to take their own lives.

In comparisons of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Indiana also ranks near the bottom with respect to the percentage of adults who hold no more than a high school degree (American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Furthermore, Indiana ranks 43rd in the percentage of its adults, ages 25 to 64, with a bachelor's degree or higher (American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). In terms of economic success, in 2015 the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reported the state's per capita income ranking as 39th. Especially alarming is the trend that the state's per capita income rank adjusted for inflation has declined over the past 20 years from 29th to 39th (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2015).

The Endowment is aware of several good efforts that are underway to address these challenges, including programs to educate and train more Indiana residents to meet today's workforce needs. However, these efforts must be improved, intensified and expanded. The Endowment believes one way to further these efforts is to expand and improve academic, college, career, and social and emotional counseling in Indiana's K-12 schools.

Across the continuum of K-12 education, counselors in schools play important roles in the healthy development of children and youth. According to the College Board, "Effective school counselors convey the expectation that all students, regardless of their background and economic status, can become college and career ready. Elementary counselors can help create early awareness

of college and career options; middle school counselors can create opportunities to explore and deepen college and career knowledge; and high school counselors complete the continuum by creating access to college and career pathways that lead to the widest range of life options for students.” And according to the American School Counselor Association, “[E]arly identification and intervention of children’s academic and social/emotional needs are essential in removing barriers to learning and in promoting academic achievement.”

To understand these issues better and to examine more closely how effective counseling can address them, the Endowment provided funding in 2015 to the Chamber Foundation to work with the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) at the University of Indianapolis to identify schools in Indiana and across the nation that have innovative and promising counseling programs that are providing, with reasonable and sustainable budgets, effective academic, college and career guidance, and social and emotional counseling for students. This follow-up study confirmed that counselors in Indiana and around the country are being asked to perform too many non-counseling duties, and as a result they do not have sufficient time to address college and career readiness concerns and the social and emotional needs of students. Furthermore, the study indicated that too many counselor education programs in Indiana do not adequately prepare counselors for their responsibilities with respect to the college and career counseling. While the 2015 study found shortfalls, it also identified some best practices for delivering counseling services in innovative ways, such as using on-line tools, including counselors on school leadership teams, reducing counselors’ non-counseling duties, and engaging business leaders and others to assist schools in helping students become college and career ready.

The Chamber Foundation received a second Endowment grant in 2015 to explore in greater depth the financial and other challenges to implementing these practices. The study also examined promising approaches that incorporate community engagement strategies to enhance and expand the impact of school counseling. Additionally, it explored the important leadership role that superintendents, principals and other administrators can play in improving the way that college and career counseling is delivered. Through this study, the Chamber Foundation highlighted a need for transformative, comprehensive counseling models that are student focused and workforce aligned. It noted that school administrators have difficulty evaluating counselors because of lack of information and consensus about the appropriate roles and responsibilities of counselors. The study also found that too few school administrators are trained in the leadership or evaluation of counselors or receive adequate education regarding how the use of an effective, comprehensive counseling model can enhance students’ lives.

Grant Opportunities and Amounts

To combat these complex and systemic challenges, the Endowment is offering this broad, statewide, competitive initiative to promote and support the development and implementation of innovative, promising and sustainable comprehensive counseling models to address the academic, college, career, and social and emotional counseling needs of K-12 students in Indiana public school corporations and charter schools. The Endowment’s aim for the Counseling Initiative is to increase significantly the number of K-12 students in Indiana who are emotionally

healthy, realize academic success, graduate from high school, obtain valuable postsecondary credentials, certifications and degrees necessary for meaningful employment, and are prepared to compete and prosper in the global society in which they will live and work.

For purposes of this initiative, “counseling” is used as a general term and when not specified includes any or all of the following domains of practice in the profession that are available within K-12 schools, including school social work, school counseling, social and emotional health counseling, and guidance relating to academic planning and scheduling and college and career preparation. “College counseling” is meant to include counseling for any post-secondary education activity, such as pursuit of degrees, certificates and other credentials. References to “comprehensive counseling” are intended to represent a holistic model that pays proper attention to all of these types of counseling.

All Indiana public school corporations and charter schools are eligible to participate in the Counseling Initiative. There will be two phases to the initiative: a noncompetitive planning grant phase and a competitive implementation phase. Each school corporation or charter school interested in receiving a planning grant must send a proposal to the Endowment by regular or express mail postmarked no later than Dec. 15, 2016. Planning grant funds are to be used to determine whether to submit an implementation grant proposal and, if so, for the preparation of such proposal. The planning grant amounts will be based on the enrollment size of each school corporation or charter school as follows: school corporations with student enrollments of 5,000 or more may request up to \$50,000; school corporations with student enrollments of less than 5,000 may request up to \$30,000; and charter schools may request up to \$30,000. The Endowment expects to notify applicants about planning grant approvals by Jan. 20, 2017.

Proposals for implementation grants must be sent to the Endowment by regular or express mail postmarked no later than May 19, 2017. Charter schools and school corporations with enrollments of more than 1,000 students may request up to \$100 per student enrolled. Applicants with enrollments of 1,000 or fewer may request up to \$100,000, even though the amount exceeds \$100 per student. Implementation grants may be used during a grant period beginning Oct. 1, 2017, through June 30, 2021. For both planning grants and implementation grants, the number of enrolled students will be the number enrolled as of Feb. 1, 2016. The Endowment expects to notify applicants about implementation grant approvals by Sept. 30, 2017.

If during the planning grant phase of the Counseling Initiative, two or more school corporations or charter schools determine that they could serve the counseling needs of their students better by collaborating with each other, they may submit a joint implementation grant proposal. They can request in their joint proposal an amount that is the total of the amounts for which they could apply if they submitted individual proposals.

The Endowment currently expects to award implementation grants totaling up to \$22 million. The Endowment, however, may approve implementation grants aggregating less than this amount based on the number, size and quality of the proposals submitted, among other factors.

Considerations and Guidelines

In preparing planning and implementation grant proposals, applicants are encouraged to take the following steps (among others), as appropriate:

- Seek out research on best practice comprehensive counseling models in Indiana and around the country and compare them to the current counseling programs of the applicant. A significant amount of best practices research has been conducted by the Chamber Foundation and CELL with Endowment support, and information derived from this research will be made available to applicants in written form and through conferences, workshops and webinars during the planning and implementation grant application processes. Applicants are encouraged to consult other sources of best practices research as they deem appropriate.
- Engage counselors, educators and administrators, as well as community partners, in finding and analyzing research on best practice comprehensive counseling models and in comparing those models to the applicant's current counseling programs. Applicants will find that best practice comprehensive counseling models incorporate significant collaborations among teachers and counselors in the schools and with community partners (e.g., businesses, Chambers of Commerce, mental health and human service providers, youth-serving agencies, arts organizations, colleges and universities, United Ways, community foundations and other funders, and religious institutions) to enhance and expand the impact of school counseling. For example, business and community leaders may provide useful labor market information, serve as mentors or career coaches, conduct in-school visits, host industry tours, serve on employer advisory councils, conduct mock interviews, provide job shadowing experiences, offer work-and-learn opportunities such as internships and apprenticeships, sponsor programs, contribute to career and technical education efforts, and define essential skills, relevant credentials and degree requirements for various careers. College, university and technical school representatives may, among other things, host campus visits, serve as student coaches, participate in presentations and provide materials on various credential and degree programs, offer guidance on how to apply for financial aid, and collaborate in other ways with K-12 counselors.
- Consider the extent to which classroom instruction, online tools, and related supportive services and resources (e.g., Indiana Career Explorer and Naviance) can complement one-on-one counseling.
- Consider the advantages of aligning the applicant's counseling programs with other relevant initiatives supported by philanthropic funders, area businesses and government agencies, such as those relating to career and technical education, skills and interest assessment and development, educational attainment, social service delivery, industry demand analyses, employer engagement, workforce development and talent attraction.
- Consider what specific professional development needs its counselors, teachers, principals, other administrators or community partners may have relating to applicant's counseling programs including, but not limited to:

- Continuing education in social and emotional health counseling resources and practices;
- Continuing education in academic, college and career planning tools, resources and practices;
- Information about available postsecondary degree, certificate and other credential programs;
- Ways to develop a deeper understanding about employment opportunities and requirements for students, for example by engaging in employer-guided information sessions and career-pathway events to learn about entry-level career preparation and skills in demand, attending employer-hosted forums, participating in industry tours, meeting with economic development and regional workforce development groups (e.g., Works Councils) or participating in teacher/counselor externships.
- Determine what technical assistance may be helpful during the grant proposal process (both for planning and implementation grants) and subsequent program implementation, if an implementation grant is approved. Examples of activities for which technical assistance may be helpful include, but are not limited to:
 - Planning and conducting collaborative community engagement meetings;
 - Building community coalitions to strengthen and expand counseling programs;
 - Engaging in reviews of articles, reports and literature and otherwise researching comprehensive counseling best practices;
 - Conducting site visits of best practice counseling programs in Indiana or outside the state;
 - Assessing current practices, services, curricula and capacity and performing gap analyses based on projected needs;
 - Developing a design, objectives, goals and an evaluation plan for its proposed counseling program, including short- and long-term performance indicators and outcomes to be accomplished and reported.

Grant Proposal Preparation

Planning Grant Proposals

Planning grant funds may be expended to conduct research with respect to best practices comprehensive counseling models, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of an applicant's current counseling programs, to engage stakeholders in the development of an implementation grant proposal, to engage consultants to help in redesigning the applicant's programs, or other appropriate purposes. To be considered for a planning grant, the applicant must complete the Planning Grant Proposal Cover Sheet, print it and attach it to the planning grant proposal. The applicant also must submit a narrative not to exceed five pages that:

- Gives a brief overview of the applicant's current counseling programs, including the number and types of staff who conduct the programs.

- Describes the applicant’s strengths and challenges with respect to addressing student counseling needs including, but not limited to, social and emotional health, academic planning and guidance, college preparation, and career exploration and readiness.
- Identifies any community partners that are engaged in efforts to enhance the applicant’s counseling programs and describes such efforts.
- Expresses the applicant’s level of commitment to conform its counseling programs more to a best practices comprehensive counseling model.
- Describes the applicant’s strategies and activities to be supported by the planning grant.
- Identifies school leaders, other school personnel and community partners who will be invited or who have agreed to participate in the development of an implementation grant proposal.
- Describes the applicant’s expected technical assistance needs during the planning grant phase.

Planning Grant Proposals – Appendices (no more than 5 pages)

Each planning grant proposal should also include the following:

- A detailed line-item budget and budget narrative for the planning period. Examples of costs that can be supported by a planning grant include, but are not limited to, travel, technical assistance and consultants, substitute personnel needed so counselors and others can engage in research and proposal planning and development, conference fees, and similar expenses.
- The completed Exempt Status and Charity/Foundation Status Information Form accompanying this Request for Proposals and supporting documentation requested in that form.
- A letter of support or endorsement from the applicant’s principal or superintendent.

Implementation Grant Proposals

The Endowment expects that each planning grant recipient will use the grant to help it determine whether to submit a proposal for an implementation grant, and if it decides to do so, to prepare the implementation grant proposal. Implementation grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. Although receiving a planning grant is not a requirement to submit an implementation grant proposal, the Endowment encourages the kind of intentional process in preparing an implementation grant that would be supported by a planning grant. To be considered for an implementation grant, the applicant should complete the Implementation Grant Cover Sheet, print it and attach it to the implementation grant proposal. The applicant also should include an executive summary of up to two pages and a narrative not to exceed 12 pages. The executive summary should:

- Provide an overview of the counselors, teachers, administrators, and community organizations and partners who have led the preparation of the implementation grant

proposal and those who will lead or manage its implementation if the applicant's proposal is approved.

- Briefly describe the comprehensive counseling model to which the applicant aspires and the features of its current counseling programs that it intends to enhance and expand to conform more to the desired model.
- Provide an outline of the outcomes to be accomplished as a result of its proposed counseling program.

In the narrative, each applicant should describe the features of the comprehensive counseling model to which it aspires, explain how the applicant's existing counseling programs do not align with the proposed model, and describe the steps that the applicant will take so that its counseling programs conform more to the desired model. The Endowment expects that there will be a broad range of programs and activities proposed by applicants, depending on the comprehensive counseling models to which they aspire; the emphases, strengths and weaknesses of applicants' existing counseling programs; the prioritization of their needs and many other factors.

Illustrative Examples of Activities and Programs That Could Be Proposed for Funding

- A public school corporation or charter school may believe that its academic and college counseling programs are stronger and more effective than its career counseling programs. Consequently, it may propose to use implementation grant funds, among others things, to hire a career guidance coordinator to engage and organize volunteer business leaders from the community to provide advice to and mentor students relating to skills the students will need to succeed in the workforce.
- Another applicant may believe that its most compelling need is to address better the social and emotional challenges of its elementary school students, and so it may propose to use the grant funds to develop a close collaboration with a local mental health clinic.
- Another may realize that it is burdening its counselors with non-counseling duties, such as test proctoring and lunchroom supervision, and so it may propose to use at least some of its grant funds to engage others to perform such responsibilities.
- Some applicants may believe that greater use of online counseling tools would significantly enhance and expand the impact of their

counseling programs and therefore propose to use their grant funds to gain access to such tools.

- Other applicants may determine that their most compelling need is for a broad range of counseling support for their upper elementary and middle school students; they may believe that they are addressing their high school students' counseling needs satisfactorily. Accordingly, they may propose to use their implementation grant funds to implement a comprehensive counseling model for their upper elementary and middle school students.
- Some applicants may propose to use grant funds to enable their counseling staff to take more advantage of professional development opportunities.
- Still other public school corporations or charter schools may believe that a wholesale redesign of their counseling programs is needed and propose that grant funds be used to help them start this process.

In addition, each applicant in the narrative should do as follows:

1. Explain its rationale for seeking grant support for one or more aspects of a comprehensive counseling model over other approaches. For example, if an applicant proposes that grant funds be used to enhance its college counseling program only, it should describe the relative strengths of its social and emotional, academic and career preparation counseling programs.
2. Describe the qualitative and quantitative outcomes it expects to achieve with its use of the grant funds, baseline data against which the outcomes will be compared and the performance indicators that it will use to track progress toward such outcomes.
3. Indicate how the program to be supported with the Endowment's grant funds is additive to the applicant's current counseling programs and how such program will be sustained after the grant period expires. Proposals that demonstrate financial support from sources other than the Endowment to implement and sustain the program to be funded by the grant will receive favorable consideration.
4. Describe the staff and other personnel who conduct the applicant's current counseling programs.
5. Indicate total annual budget for the applicant's current counseling programs.
6. Indicate the applicant's current number of K-12 students per counselor.
7. Describe how the applicant's counseling staff, counseling budget, counseling responsibilities and number of K-12 students per counselor would change if its implementation grant proposal is approved.

8. Describe the planned involvement and support of community partners or other organizations external to the applicant (e.g., businesses, Chambers of Commerce, mental health and human service providers, youth-serving agencies, arts organizations, colleges and universities, United Ways, community foundations and other funders, and religious institutions) that will be engaged in efforts to enhance the applicant's proposed counseling program.

In joint proposals, the applicants should address as appropriate the requirements of this Request for Proposals as though they were preparing individual proposals and also describe the rationale for their determination that the collaborative program they are proposing will serve the counseling needs of their students better than one they would propose by themselves.

Implementation Grant Proposals – Appendices (no more than 12 pages)

Each implementation grant proposal should also include the following:

- A Gantt chart depicting its program timeline and performance indicators to be accomplished during each six-month period ending December 31 and June 30 for the duration of the grant period.
- A detailed line-item budget and budget narrative for the proposed grant formatted for each of the applicant's fiscal years throughout the grant period.
- Statements from community representatives and other external stakeholders that demonstrate their support of the proposal and affirm any commitment they have to help implement and sustain the activities described in the proposal.
- Confirmation that the applicant's proposed program will conform to all applicable laws, rules, regulations, accountability standards, collective bargaining contracts and similar requirements.
- A letter endorsing the proposal from the leader of the applicant's governing body.

Grantmaking Criteria

The following criteria, among others, will help guide the Endowment's grantmaking decisions:

- The extent to which a proposal demonstrates that the applicant understands and has used relevant research on comprehensive counseling best practices, has compared its current counseling programs to comprehensive counseling best practices and has thoughtfully identified and described the strengths and of its current counseling programs.
- The extent to which the rationale for an applicant's prioritization of the features of its counseling program for which it seeks funding is well developed and compelling. The rationale should among other things demonstrate why the applicant seeks funding for certain features and not others.
- The extent to which a proposal indicates that the applicant engaged community partners and other external stakeholders in developing the proposal and will engage them in implementation of the proposed program if the grant proposal is approved. The proposal

also should describe the extent of financial and in-kind support that community partners and external stakeholders have committed to help sustain the proposed counseling program after the grant period. If the applicant did not or will not engage community partners or external stakeholders, it should describe its rationale for not doing so.

- The extent to which a proposal demonstrates that the applicant is committed to implementing and sustaining an appropriate best practices comprehensive counseling model for its students or to working toward achieving such an aim within a reasonable period of time.
- The extent to which a proposal indicates that the applicant will devote sufficient financial resources to implement and sustain the proposed counseling program if an implementation grant is approved. Proposals that show matching support (from the applicant's own funds or from external stakeholders) for the proposed counseling program during the implementation grant period will be favored.
- The extent to which a proposal indicates that the applicant has developed and is committed to an evaluation plan to demonstrate the impact of the proposed counseling program. Such evaluation plan should include relevant baseline data, performance indicators and outcomes that the applicant expects to achieve through the effective execution of the proposed counseling program. Qualitative and quantitative evaluation measures should be described.
- The extent to which a proposal demonstrates that the applicant has been creative in designing and developing the program it proposes for Endowment funding and that the proposed counseling program will meaningfully enhance the quality of its counseling efforts and expand its impact on the applicant's students.

The timeline for the Counseling Initiative's planning and implementation grants is as follows:

1. Planning grant proposals must be sent to the Endowment by regular or express mail postmarked no later than Dec. 15, 2016.
2. Planning grant applicants should be notified of grant approvals by Jan. 20, 2017.
3. Proposals for implementation grants must be sent to the Endowment by regular or express mail postmarked no later than May 19, 2017.
4. Applicants should be notified of implementation grant approvals by Sept. 30, 2017.

Grant proposals and inquiries should be sent to:

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