



Every Child. One Community. Cradle to Career.

Request for Proposals

Graduate Tacoma Community Learning Fund *A Catalytic Investment Opportunity for Community Partners*

RFP Outline

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I. Background on Funding Opportunity

In June 2019 the Foundation for Tacoma Students (FFTS) announced a one-time investment from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) to deepen the capacity and capability of the Graduate Tacoma community-wide movement. This investment presents an opportunity to elevate our collective action through sub-grant funding in **three investment areas** and, most importantly, strengthen our ability to improve outcomes for all students.

- [Click here](#) for additional background information

As part of this work, we are excited to announce this Request for Proposals for 12-month funding partnerships. Through these subgrant funds we aim to build the capacity and capability of partner organizations and the wider Graduate Tacoma movement.

II. Shared Learning Agenda

With this investment, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is seeking to learn from the Graduate Tacoma community-wide movement, as well as other communities across the country, how they can accelerate progress across their nation-wide education investment portfolio. However, the learning will not be one way. In consultation with BMGF and our community partners, FFTS hopes this new funding will be an opportunity to enable learning amongst all partners within our community-wide movement.

Our Learning Agenda is reflective of multiple conversations and rounds of input with community partners. It serves to focus our attention through the investment period on areas of learning that we believe will accelerate our progress towards closing racial and economic disparities for Tacoma's future generations.

To do this, we are committed to two learnings:

1. We will increase our understanding of the various types of **equity** impacting young people in Tacoma.
2. We will increase our understanding of the ways practices, policies and behaviors influence **systems change**.

III. Expectations for Subgrantees

Through these subgrant investments FFTS aims to improve alignment and systems to benefit young people in Tacoma. Shared learning will be a guiding principle as we work together through the term of the subgrants. While we will keep administrative burdens and formal reporting requirements to a minimum, subgrantees should expect high engagement with FFTS and their subgrantee cohort along the following levels:

- Subgrantees will **contribute to our Learning Agenda**
 - FFTS seeks to fund organizations who share our commitment to increasing our understanding of various levels and types of **equity** and **systems change**
- Subgrantees will **participate in one of three workstream learning cohorts**
 - The cohorts will be convened and facilitated by FFTS staff and will serve as peer-to-peer learning groups. Cohort curriculums and content will be tailored to respond to subgrantee learning goals, and may include elements such as: trainings around tools and frameworks; guest presenters and issue area experts; and organizational development capacity building, (nonprofit financial management, human resources, etc.)
- Subgrantees will **contribute to our testing of the hypotheses** under each workstream



- Subgrantees should be able to see themselves fitting into at least one of the three workstream hypotheses. **Please see the [background information packet](#)** for information on each workstream hypothesis and workstream goals.

Additionally, FFTS would like to engage in co-created data sharing agreements with each subgrantee. Data sharing agreements will enable learning directly from youth-serving program providers, guide and inform future work, and assist with developing continuous improvement.

IV. Key Dates, Information Sessions and Contacts

The anticipated timeline for the subgranting process is as follows:

- **Release of Request for Proposals** - Oct. 7, 2019
- **Deadline for proposals to be submitted** - Nov. 8, 2019
- **Applicants updated on their status** – mid-Dec., 2019
- **MOU/Data Sharing Agreement Co-Creation** – Mid-Dec. through mid-Jan., 2020

FFTS will host prospective applicant information sessions at our offices at 919 S. 9th Street, Tacoma, WA 98405 on the following dates. [Please be sure to RSVP in advance!](#)

- **Info session #1** - Oct. 14, 2019, 4:30-6:00pm
- **Info session #2** - Oct. 21, 2019, 1:30-3:00pm
- **Info session #3** - Oct. 29, 2019, 8:30-10:00am

FFTS staff is also happy to connect with organizations directly to answer questions about the proposal process and the subgranting opportunity. Please feel free to reach out to Ben Mitchell at bmitchell@graduatetacoma.org.

We also encourage interested organizations to reach out to members of our Executive Advisory Committee with any questions. The EAC is an important partner in this process, and EAC members are listed below:

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|--|--|
| ● Tanya Durand, Greentrike | tdurand@playtacoma.org |
| ● Priscilla Lisicich, Safe St. | plisicich@safest.org |
| ● Diana Comfort, Big Brother's Big Sisters | diana.comfort@bbbbsps.org |
| ● Shanna Lamar, College Success Foundation | slamar@collegesuccessfoundation.org |
| ● Jonathan Jackson, Palmer Scholars | jjackson@palmerscholars.org |
| ● Sandra Eliason, Metro Parks Tacoma | sandrae@tacomaparks.com |
| ● Joyce Loveday, Clover Park Technical College | joyce.loveday@cptc.edu |
| ● April Black, Tacoma Housing Authority | ablack@tacomahousing.org |
| ● Kimberly Keith, Hilltop Artists | kkeith@hilltopartists.org |
| ● T'wina Nobles, Tacoma Urban League | president@thetacomaurbanleague.org |
| ● Louis Garcia, Big Brother's Big Sister's | louis.garcia@bbbbsps.org |
| ● Mentha Hynes-Wilson, UW Tacoma | hynes@uw.edu |

V. Subgranting Process

FFTS aims for the subgranting process to be transparent, accessible and flexible. The subgranting process will be iterative and will consist of two main stages:

1. Stage One - Open solicitation for proposals of interest (Oct. through early Dec., 2019)



- a. Our review process will be informed by the investment’s executive advisory council, Collaborative Action Network leaders, and other institutional partners. FFTS will then select proposals for participation in stage two.
- b. FFTS staff will review all received proposals and work with our existing advisory channels to narrow down to a set of organizations that we intend to fund
- c. All organizations who submitted proposals will be updated on their status in early-Dec., 2019

2. Stage Two - Co-Creation and Negotiation of MOU (Mid-Dec. through mid-Jan., 2020)

- a. FFTS staff will work with all organizations we intend to fund to refine the details of the subgrant investment, including: the subgrant budget, timeline, subgrant disbursement schedule, data sharing agreements, and other details of the final subgrant MOUs
- b. We intend to have all MOUs finalized by mid-Jan., 2020

Our evaluation criteria for winnowing from our initial pool of applicants to a cohort of organizations we intend to fund are reflective of the overall goals for the BMGF investment. As part of that process **we will consider the following criteria in making our decision:**

- **Alignment with a given workstream**
 - How does the organization’s work and proposed subgrant investment align with the workstream goal and hypothesis?
- **Contribution to our shared Learning Agenda**
 - How would an investment in an organization contribute to the investment’s learning agenda goals?
- **Contribution to equitable outcomes**
 - How does the organization’s work and/or proposed subgranting work support more equitable outcomes for Tacoma students?

VI. How to Apply: Stage One

Please [click here](#) to visit our online portal to submit your proposal for this funding opportunity. Please be sure to have your written responses prepared in advance as the online portal does not allow you to save your work.

At this stage we are *not* requesting applicants to request specific dollar amounts for subgrants or to submit budgets. Please focus your thinking on the capacity or capability you want to build. Subgrants to eligible organizations may range in size and up to an expected maximum amount of \$60,000

Proposals should be submitted by 5:00pm on Friday, Nov. 8. Please reach out to Ben Mitchell at bmitchell@graduatetacoma.org with any questions or if you have any trouble submitting your proposal through the online portal. FFTS will acknowledge receipt of all proposals received by the deadline.

As part of your proposal you will be asked to provide basic profile, budget and contact information for your organization, then respond to the following questions:

1. **Desired Workstream**
 1. Under which workstream are you interested in applying?
 2. If your first choice workstream is not available, would you like to be considered for a different workstream? If yes, please indicate your second choice.

2. General Organization Information



1. Please provide a brief summary of your organization's mission and key programs.
 2. Please describe how your work contributes to equitable outcomes for Tacoma students.
3. **Learning Community Stage One Questions**
1. Describe the benefits your organization would gain by participating in one of the workstream learning cohorts.
 2. Describe how an investment in your organization could impact and influence the workstream of your choice.
 3. If funded, describe how your proposed activities would contribute to the shared learning agenda?

VII. Summary Information

- **RFP Announcement Date**
 - Oct. 7, 2019
- **Proposal Deadline**
 - 5:00pm, Friday, Nov. 8, 2019
- **How to Apply**
 - Proposals should be submitted through the [online portal](#) (and be 2 to 5 pages in length)
- **Description**
 - Subgrants administered by the Foundation for Tacoma Students for a 12-month funding term. Subgrant funds are intended to support a range of investments in organizational capacity and capability across three investment areas: 1) Community Partner Capacity and Capability; 2) Data Capacity and Capability; 3) Postsecondary Access and Completion
- **Eligibility:**
 - Must be classified as a 501(c)(3) public charity, be fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3), or have intent to obtain fiscal sponsorship
- **Funding Range:**
 - Subgrants to eligible organizations will range in size and up to an expected maximum amount of \$60,000. Applicants are not asked to request a specific funding amount at this stage. FFTS will work with funded organizations to ensure that subgrants are of an appropriate size to fund the work that is proposed
- **Information Sessions:**
 - In-person informational sessions will be hosted at the FFTS Office in Tacoma on Oct. 14, 21, and 29.
 - Please register for information sessions [here](#)
- **Questions and Contact Information:**
 - Please reach out to Ben Mitchell at bmitchell@graduatetacoma.org with any questions about this opportunity or process

VIII. Examples of Eligible Work

FFTS will award subgrants to organizations under any one of three investment areas:

1. Community Partner Capacity & Capability
2. Data Capacity & Capability
3. Postsecondary Access & Completion



Applicants should indicate under which investment area they would like to be considered, and subgrants can be used to support a wide-array of investments in organizational capacity and capability.

Capacity is defined as an organization's ability or limit, by way of funding or staff, to execute a certain program or strategy. (In other words, think about work that you *already* do but that you would like to bolster or strengthen).

Capability entails the tools or professional training necessary to execute a certain program or strategy. (In other words, think about the work that you are either not doing or would like to do better and that you would like to build specific skills around).

The areas of work that are described below are meant to be illustrative. ***Prior to preparing a funding proposal please carefully review the [background information packet](#).***

1. Community Partner Capacity and Capability

Examples of work that could be funded under this workstream include:

- Professional development and skill building for organization executives and leaders
- Outside consultants for program design work, strategic planning, organizational design, theories of action, logic model development, etc.
- Investments in internal diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives
- Short-term, (12-months or less), investment in supplemental staffing for programmatic *or* operational/administrative purposes
- Investments to support the organizational board development or other governance models
- Investments in financial management, (e.g. new accounting software, tools, and training)
- Investments to support organizational fundraising and fund development
- Investments to support human resources/people effectiveness needs

2. Data Capacity and Capability

Examples of work that could be funded under this workstream include:

- Purchase of new data tools and resources. (e.g. software, equipment, proprietary templates and curriculums, etc.)
- Investment in trainings and other professional development around data methodologies and tools
- Support for attendance at conferences and or convenings focused on data methodologies and best practices
- Short-term, (12-months or less), investment in supplemental staffing to support internal data capacity or capability

3. Postsecondary Access and Completion

Examples of work that could be funded under this workstream include:

- Investments in tools, resources, or short-term staff, (12-months or less) to help scale or enhance existing programs or projects that are focused on postsecondary access or completion
- Investments in tools, resources, or short-term staff, (12 months or less) to pilot new programs or projects that are focused on postsecondary access or completion
- Investments in consultants or staffing for programmatic design or research around postsecondary access or completion interventions

IX. Additional Subgrant Information



To be eligible for funding organizations must have a programmatic presence in Tacoma. Organizations must be classified as a 501(c)(3) public charity, be fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3), or have intent to obtain fiscal sponsorship.

Through the Community Learning Fund, FFTS will be investing \$1.5 million into the Tacoma community through subgrants, consulting services, and contracts. Through this Request for Proposals we intend to make subgrants ranging in size and up to a maximum of \$60,000 per individual subgrant. FFTS will work with funded organizations to finalize subgrant budgets and ensure that subgrants are of an appropriate size to fund the work that is proposed.

The expected term of the grants will be for 12 months, ideally from January through December, 2020. Depending on the nature of the work, subgrant funds may be disbursed up-front or on a reimbursement basis upon completion of subgrant milestones. FFTS staff will work with funded organizations to ensure that the subgrant disbursement schedule does not hinder the proposed work.

X. About Graduate Tacoma and the Foundation for Tacoma Students

Over the last nine years, the collective action of the Graduate Tacoma community-wide movement, institutional change within Tacoma Public Schools, and the leadership of teachers and support staff have transformed education in Tacoma. High school graduation rates have skyrocketed. Tacoma kids are wearing their potential on their sleeves, and we see the promise of the future of our city through their dreams.

The Foundation for Tacoma Students (FFTS) plays a unique role in supporting and holding center for the Graduate Tacoma movement. As the movement's backbone organization, the Foundation helps align organizations, institutions, and individuals around positive outcomes for students. We create shared responsibility and align goals, data, and resources so community partners can build an informed and holistic support system for young people. We promote and support strategic partnerships that foster systems alignment to build a Tacoma where every child succeeds in school, career, and life.

More than two-thirds of the experiences and learning opportunities that shape a child's life occur outside of the classroom. Our community-wide approach closes the gap between school and home to ensure that every child has access and opportunities for quality learning and growth. Kids need the community at different times. Graduate Tacoma is about reaching them when and where they need us. Serving as the only cradle to career intermediary in Tacoma, FFTS provides a unique lens and role to the education system. Not limited by any system or process, FFTS is able to provide creativity and innovation to the complex and adaptive challenges that the students of Tacoma face. We believe this unique role and lens is critical if we are to realize systems change in our community.

