



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

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### **ESTABLISHING URBAN UNIVERSITIES AS ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS IN DEVELOPING CROSS-SECTOR P-20 ACCESS AND SUCCESS PARTNERSHIPS**

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In partnership with the Living Cities, the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU) is requesting proposals from urban universities and their partners seeking to create P-20 partnerships to redefine and improve the educational system in their communities. Living Cities is a unique partnership of philanthropic, corporate, and public sector leaders working to bring opportunities to the urban centers of our nation and empower those who have too often been left behind. As part of their recently released American City Agenda, Living Cities is focusing on reengineering education in order to meet the needs of an ever-changing workforce.

One core element of this reengineering process is further establishing universities as anchors of development and opportunity within their region. USU is partnering with Living Cities based on our shared interests and the common goal of developing a contemporary workforce, through an improved educational system to create a workforce ready to compete in the 21st century.

A primary strategy for achieving this goal is the creation of P-20 access and success partnerships that redefine educational systems within a community. These partnerships are founded on five principles:

- Education must be redefined to ensure students have the skills needed to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Appropriate cross sector leaders seeking to drive and sustain educational improvements can have a more powerful impact by working together.
- All interested stakeholders need to have a common forum to engage in developing solutions.
- Local data and evidence should drive strategic and action planning.
- Existing resources must be leveraged in order to create new programs.

Living Cities has identified a model P-20 access and success partnership based in Cincinnati for adaptation in up to five (5) additional sites among the USU member institutions. This model is

called **Strive: A Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Birth to Career Collaborative**. More details on the partnership can be found on their website at [www.strivetogether.org](http://www.strivetogether.org).

By becoming one of the selected sites, a member institution/city will:

- Become a national demonstration site for innovation in educational improvements that lead to improved student achievement and economic development outcomes within their region.
- Join a network of committed leaders focused on ensuring that universities serve as anchor institutions that drive innovation and reform of outdated educational models.
- Develop a foundational partnership that attracts investors locally and nationally in evidence-based, collaborative solutions to complex issues that trouble urban centers across the country.

Through the Living Cities/USU partnership, comprehensive technical assistance and support will be provided to the selected USU member sites to establish a strong and sustainable partnership, identify levers in each community that drive action, develop evidence-based action plans around priority strategies, and develop over time a national network to share lessons learned and further develop models for collaborative partnerships in other USU cities.

### **Establishing a P-20 Partnership**

The intent of this RFP is to identify sites that are committed to developing or expanding and improving a P-20 access and success partnership to redefine the educational pipeline in their communities. The plan is for these sites to become national models to demonstrate the critical role that higher education plays in such partnerships. Success will be defined as the development of a partnership that leverages the power of cross sector leadership and research on proven local programs and practices to drive improved student outcomes across the education continuum from birth through career.

In order to identify and further develop partnerships in the selected sites that are poised for success, the grant-making process will occur in two phases: *planning* and *implementation*. The *planning grant phase* will require applicant sites to determine their readiness and capacity for this effort and to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI), a preliminary proposal and ultimately a final proposal as outlined below, as well as participation in a technical assistance workshop for up to 10 sites, and for selected sites, a site visit by the USU/LC/Strive Leadership Team and other due diligence efforts. To support the completion of the planning phase, 10 selected sites submitting preliminary proposals will receive a \$5,000 grant to cover attending the technical assistance workshop and the completion of the planning grant.

At the end of the planning phase, up to five (5) sites will be selected to continue into *the implementation phase*, which will require a refined, final proposal to be submitted collectively to Living Cities, which is committed to developing the P-16 evidence-based partnership model with the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities. To that end, Living Cities will provide baseline implementation funding through USU for the small cohort of pilot efforts and will work intensively to leverage additional resources for specific sites as well as for overall project management.

### **Step 1: Letter of Intent (LOI) Guidelines**

A Letter of Intent (LOI) from each interested USU member must be submitted by **September 17, 2008**. The LOI will allow the USU/Living Cities/Strive Leadership Team to assess member interest early in the process. This LOI (two to three pages maximum) should address the following:

- a) Acknowledgement of *general* alignment with Strive's five goals. Those goals are that every student in the region will:
  - Be prepared for school through early childhood education
  - Be supported inside and outside school
  - Succeed academically
  - Enroll in some form of college
  - Graduate and enter a career
- b) Evidence that a *collective* will exists to develop a sustained partnership among key leaders.
- c) A brief analysis of the local contextual factors that need to be addressed in the development of the partnership.
- d) Interest of local funders who might support the partnership over time.

### **Step 2: Selection of 10 Sites to Submit Preliminary Proposals**

By **September 23, 2008**, USU/Living Cities/Strive Leadership Team will acknowledge the receipt of the LOI. Up to 10 sites will be selected to submit **draft** proposals due **October 7, 2008**. The guidelines for the content of the 10-page preliminary proposal follow:

#### **Preliminary Proposal Guidelines**

##### A. Local Context for Partnership

A brief overview must be provided of historical and existing partnerships that offer lessons learned and a possible foundation on which to build an effective P-20 access and success partnership. Key proposal elements include:

- **Past Efforts:** What efforts have been made in the past to align sectors to address complex education and economic development issues? What possible lessons have been drawn from these efforts that would inform the development of this partnership?
- **Existing Partnerships:** What existing partnerships exist that may be incorporated within the proposed P-20 partnership?
- **Community Assets:** What are the assets in the community that could be the foundation for the partnership?
- **Community Challenges:** What are the current and historical challenges in the city related to education and economic development that will have to be addressed?
- **Key Partners:** Who are the partners across various key sectors – education, philanthropy, business, non-profit, civic, and public – within the region that will need to be engaged to sustain and drive improvements in education and economic development? Support letters from the leaders and executives of these partners should be provided in an Appendix and are not part of the 10-page limit. The letters should demonstrate a commitment to the five goals and a commitment to be actively engaged over time to drive action within the region.

### B. Commitment of Staffing Support

In order for a partnership to be effective in developing sustainability, key leadership and support are needed. Please describe how the following resources will be made available to drive and sustain the partnership:

- **A project manager** who will oversee the work of the partnership, including such functions as engagement of partners and management of the appropriate governance structure, identification of community level outcomes and priority strategies to make desired improvements, and the creation of networks around each priority strategy.
- **A facilitator** who will be trained to work with networks of providers around each priority strategy to develop evidence-based action plans.
- **Experts in data collection and management** to support the collection and management of information and data to support knowledge management and data-driven decision-making. This could include graduate assistants. In addition to describing how this role will be filled, please describe key partners that this person will need to work with to develop a comprehensive accountability system in the community that incorporates data across the educational pipeline from birth through college and including the academic and social emotional development of children.

### C. Funders Collaborative

Eventually, a collaborative of public, private, and philanthropic funders must be formed to support the action plans that emerge. The proposal should identify one or more leaders who would be willing to convene funders with an explanation of why this person is positioned to play this role. A list of key funders within the region should also be identified.

The proposal must identify a leader for convening funders with a description of qualifications and an explanation of why this person is positioned to play this role and a letter of commitment from the individual's home institution affirming support for the effort and willingness to play this role. A list of key funders within the region must be identified along with an explanation of any existing funder collaboratives within the region that may be leveraged to play this role.

### D. Evaluation Plan

Partnerships must commit to evidence-based approaches and establish benchmarks for accountability for the partnership. Briefly describe how these benchmarks will be established and key data will be collected, analyzed and disseminated.

### **Step 3: Attendance at the Workshop**

Preliminary proposal applicants are invited to attend a workshop on **Oct. 12, 2008**, prior to the already scheduled **Council of Academic Deans from Research Education Institutions (CADREI)** meeting (Oct. 12-15, 2008) in Newport, RI. They will present a summary of their preliminary proposals and receive feedback/technical assistance from the USU/Living Cities/Strive Leadership Team. The primary purpose of the workshop is to provide feedback and technical assistance to the selected sites in order to help enable them to refine planning grant proposals for final submission on **November 13, 2008**.

**Step 4: Site visits**

USU/Living Cities/Strive Leadership Team will review proposals and notify up to five (5) sites by **November 25** that a site visit will take place. Site visits will be completed by **December 31, 2008**. These visits will allow a better understanding of the scope and depth of the partners' commitment to this work and the local contextual factors that will impact the development of the partnership. They will also help determine the financial resources and technical assistance that will be needed to ensure the partnership is successful in the implementation phase of the grant. Individual sites may be asked to provide additional information or verification of material or in-kind commitments as part of USU's due diligence efforts.

**Step 5: Selection of Up to Five Sites as National Demonstration Sites**

By **January 15, 2009**, the USU/LC/Strive Leadership Team will notify the member sites of their selection to become national demonstration sites.

**Step 6: Final Proposals for Implementation Grants**

The selected sites will submit a final proposal to Living Cities by **February 15, 2009**. This signals the beginning of the implementation phase.

**PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS/TIMELINE**

*All materials should be submitted to Pat Brown on behalf of the USU/LC/Strive Leadership Team electronically at [brownp@strivetogether.org](mailto:brownp@strivetogether.org).*

**September 4, 2008:** RFP announced.

**September 17, 2008:** 2-3 page Letter of Intent (LOI) due.

**September 23, 2008:** Announcement of 10 sites selected to submit preliminary proposals.

**October 7, 2008:** A draft planning proposal (up to 10 pages).

**October 12, 2008:** Attendance at workshop in Newport, RI, to receive feedback and technical assistance in order to refine draft proposals.

**November 13, 2008:** Final proposals submitted.

**November 25, 2008:** Notification of site visits.

**December 31, 2008:** Completion of site visits.

**January 15, 2009:** Announcement of up to five (5) member sites of their selection to become national demonstration sites.

**February 15, 2009:** A final collective proposal delivered to Living Cities for implementation funding.