



Proposal Guidelines

These proposal guidelines are intended to help you prepare your proposal and gather the required documentation. The guidelines include a checklist of required documents and more detailed instructions about each component of the proposal.

All proposals should be submitted online.

When you are ready to submit the information described below, **please use this [link](#) to access our online grantee portal.** We recommend using Firefox or Chrome as your internet browser when using our online grant application. Please do not use Internet Explorer, as you may encounter issues. Follow the instructions in your invitation email regarding logging into the online grantee portal. After you log in, click edit next to your application. If you are accessing the application for the first time, the status will say 'Application Invited.'

You will be asked to submit some of the proposal information directly into fields on the online form and you will be asked to upload the proposal narrative and budget and other supporting organizational documents as separate attachments.

This online form will allow you to stop and save your work at any time. We recommend you save the online form frequently as you work on the proposal.

If you have questions related to the content of the application, please contact your program officer. If you have technical questions, or experience any issues in logging in or submitting the online application, please email support@collegefutures.org or call Cole, Program Assistant at (415) 287-1807.

Within two to three weeks of submitting your proposal, your program officer who requested the proposal will contact you to provide feedback, explain the review process, and address any questions that you may have.

Proposal Checklist

Please *upload the following as separate attachments* on the Attachments page (tab 3) of the online grant request form:

- Grant request narrative (see pages 4-5 for Narrative Grant Request Guidelines)
- Proposed project budget (see pages 6-7 for Project Budget Guidelines)
- Organization's operating budget (revenues and expenses) for your organization's current fiscal year*. If the project will have a fiscal sponsor, please provide the current fiscal year budget for the sponsored program. (Your program officer may also request the budget for the fiscal sponsor organization.)
- IRS Form 990 (most recent)*. Note that this is not required for public schools, school districts, public colleges or universities or other government entities. If there is a fiscal sponsor, please provide the IRS Form 990 for the fiscal sponsor.
- Audited financial statements, including notes and management letter(s), for the last two fiscal year(s)*. If audited financial statements are not yet complete for the most recently completed fiscal year, you may submit unaudited statements for that year. For organizations with a total annual operating budget under \$500,000 and without audited financial statements, in-house statements, verified and signed by an authorized representative of the organization, are acceptable. If there is a fiscal sponsor, please provide the fiscal sponsor's audited financial statements.
- Current year internal financial statements, including Statement of Financial Activities and a Balance Sheet, and statement of cash flow for the current fiscal year. Unaudited statements are acceptable. If there is a fiscal sponsor, please include these documents for the fiscal sponsor organization as well as for the sponsored program.
- A list of grants received by your organization in the last 12 months including sources and amounts.
- A list of your organization's Board of Directors, with names, affiliations and Board officers (i.e., Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary)*. If there is a fiscal sponsor, please provide the list of Board of Directors for the fiscal sponsor.
- In the case of a *sponsored* project, a Memorandum of Understanding or fiscal sponsorship agreement from the fiscal sponsor indicating full acceptance of programmatic and fiscal responsibility for the grant. All required documents must be submitted by the sponsoring organization, which will serve as the official grantee of the Foundation, receiving the grant award agreement and payments.

* *If you have been awarded a grant within the last year, you only need to submit if you have a newer version than what you submitted previously.*

Funding Guidelines

Overview of College Futures Foundation – *More Graduates for a Thriving California*

We believe that a vibrant future for California’s economy and communities requires more bachelor’s degrees and that every student in California should have the opportunity to succeed in college.

Accordingly, we seek to increase the rate of bachelor’s degree completion among California student populations who are low-income and have had historically low college success rates.

To achieve our goal, we have adopted a student-centered strategy with the following three outcomes aimed at removing barriers to college success:

1. **Successful Transitions:** Institutions ensure student readiness and effective transitions from secondary school to college, and from community college to four-year colleges and universities.
2. **Aligned Institutions:** Regional partnerships align leaders, resources and decision-making among school districts, colleges, and their partners to advance student progress toward bachelor’s degrees.
3. **Improved Policy & Practice:** Policymakers and practitioners address gaps between policies and practices at all levels affecting student success.

The following cross-cutting themes and underlying principles define our approach.

1. **Focus attention on students.** We focus on the experience and success of low-income and underrepresented students in higher education and encourage institutions to focus on and track student success.
2. **Use data effectively.** We work with our grantees and their partners to set clear goals for student success and degree production, and develop processes for monitoring progress that include embedded feedback and learning loops. We promote the use of data that fosters innovation, inquiry, and local solutions to overcoming college transition and degree completion barriers.
3. **Emphasize regional approaches.** California’s size and diversity requires differential strategies tailored to fit real economic, cultural, and institutional differences across the regions. Moreover, solutions to the challenges facing students must be grounded in data and culture- and community-relevant.
4. **Value the role of local cross-sector leadership.** Creative and effective support for students needs to be done by education, community and other leaders who are committed to improving college attainment for low-income students in their communities and who are simultaneously collaborative and highly focused.

5. **Ensure resource allocation factors into decision-making.** We ensure, wherever appropriate, that a fiscal perspective is integrated into any improved processes at the post-secondary institution and system-wide by aligning spending with goals and priorities.
6. **Build capacity to empower leadership.** Through our grants and funding of technical assistance, we seek to help local leaders access and use regional and inter-segmental data to pinpoint issues and identify interventions, and adopt new policies, practices and procedures that help students transition from one education system to another and ultimately, complete a bachelor's degree. We are not prescriptive in the specific changes that we expect institutions to make, rather we support discovery, experimentation, and innovation and empower leadership with the language, skills and tools to address barriers and drive change.

Grant Request Narrative Guidelines

The following outline provides suggestions to help you write the proposal narrative. It is not necessary to adhere to this outline or to include all of these items in your proposal narrative. Rather, these suggestions are provided to help you understand how we will assess the proposal and clarify which information Foundation staff finds to be most useful. Please limit your proposal narrative to no more than 10 pages. Clarity and concision is of greatest importance.

We encourage you to contact the Foundation staff member who requested the proposal from you if you have any questions.

*Please upload the narrative document as a MS Word document in the **Grant Request Narrative** section of the **Attachments** page (tab 3) of the online grant request form.*

1. Description of Project

Provide a complete description of what you are seeking to do and accomplish with the requested funds, including:

- **Brief project overview and rationale:** What will this project accomplish and why is this important? If the project is in support of a regional partnership, provide a brief history of the partnership and description of its goals, sector involvement (education, business, civic, etc.), and membership with explicit listing of education institutions and leaders involved.
- **Target institutions:** If your strategy involves high schools, school districts or post-secondary institutions, please provide some information about the college success environment at the high schools or school districts and colleges or universities. This information should include relevant indicators for college success (where available) including A-G completion rates for target schools or districts, college enrollment rates, proportion of students eligible for free or reduced meals, and for the college or university, retention and degree completion rates. Please cite the sources for this information.
- **Goals, objectives and projected outcomes** ([click here to download definitions](#)). State the goal, objectives and outcomes for this project (no more than one page).

- **Project strategy and activities:** Describe the proposed strategy to accomplish your goals. If this is a renewal proposal to continue or build from prior work to accomplish similar goals, describe what has been accomplished and lessons learned from your experience to date and any adjustments in your proposed strategy that reflect your experience to date.
- **Outcomes, Indicators and Data Collection Plan:** Outline specific data and/or indicators that you plan to collect to track your progress and to measure your outcomes. **See list of data required by the Foundation on page 6.** Provide your proposed plan and timeline for data collection and analysis.

2. Project Management and Timeline

- Describe the proposed staffing for the project, identifying project personnel and any consultants or advisors who would be involved with the project. Include brief biographies of the key staff who will lead program implementation.
- Provide the timeline for accomplishing the stated activities, objectives, and projected outcomes.

3. Organizational Rationale

- Provide information about your organization, its experience and its track record. Describe how your organization is uniquely positioned to carry out this effort. Specifically describe your organization's expertise in working with the target audiences and/or partner institutions.
- If appropriate, describe what your organization is planning to commit in terms of resources towards project's goals and objectives.

4. Project Risks or Challenges

- Describe the risks that you foresee in undertaking the proposed strategy. What are your strategies for mitigating these risks?

5. Project Budget Narrative

- Indicate the total annual project budget and the specific amount of that total requested from the Foundation; if the request is for a multi-year grant, indicate the amount requested on an annual basis and in total.
- Provide a brief description of each budget line item, including a description of the type of costs included in the "indirect cost" line item, if this has been requested.

List of Data Required for High School or Post-Secondary Program Interventions

Institutional-level Student Data

If your grant work is at an institutional level (high school- or district-wide effort or at a post-secondary institution), we expect the student-related data to be aggregated at the high school class or post-secondary institution level for the following measures.

High school or district-level:

- Number of 12th grade enrolled students
- Number of high school graduating seniors
- Proportion of 12th grade enrolled students in the Free and Reduced Meal Program
- Proportion of 12th grade enrolled students by ethnic/racial group: Latino, African-American, Asian and Pacific Islander, or White
- Number of 12th grade enrolled students with completed FAFSAs
- Number of 12th grade enrolled students with completed Cal Grant and California Dream Act applications
- Number of students with Cal Grant awards offered
- Distribution of postsecondary enrollment by institution type

Post-secondary institution level:

- Number of enrolled students (i.e., first-year, second-year, etc.)
- Proportion of low-income students
- Proportion of under-represented students
- Number and proportion of students with completed FAFSAs
- Number and proportion of students with completed Cal Grant and California Dream Act applications
- Number and proportion of students with Cal Grant awards by year of college enrollment
- Persistence and completion rates by year of college enrollment (completion is defined as transfer-ready, transfer or AA/AS award for 2-year institutions and BA/BS award for 4-year institutions)

Project Budget Guidelines

*As noted in the Proposal Checklist, please upload the project budget as an Excel document in the **Proposed Project Budget** section of the **Attachments** page (tab 3) of the online grant request form. Download and complete the appropriate PROJECT BUDGET form located on tab 3.*

As per the form, please provide an annual budget for the proposed activities and proposed grant period that provides the overall program budget and within that budget, indicates the specific expenditures to be funded through the Foundation's grant.

In the appropriate section in the form, provide a list of funders, if relevant, that are already committed to the project including dollar amounts of grants secured and any key funding prospects (pending or projected) along with estimated dollar amounts. If your institution is planning to commit its own resources to this project, please also indicate the amount accordingly.

The project budget should closely align with the activities you describe in your proposal narrative. Therefore, the budget should be an appropriate projection of the expenses necessary to carry out the planned activities. Your project budget will be reviewed and, in many cases, discussed with you to ensure that it aligns with the goal and objectives of your proposal. Proposal negotiation with Foundation staff may lead to budget revisions. If your grant request is approved, a final approved budget will be included in the grant agreement, and financial reports relative to this budget must be provided to the Foundation as per the grant requirements.