

Request for Proposal: Incentivizing and Scaling Career Pathways

ECMC Foundation (ECMCF) recognizes postsecondary education to be the integral link connecting underserved adults to opportunities for upward mobility and a family-sustaining wage. Postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) pathways comprise the basis for investments made by ECMC Foundation's Career Readiness portfolio.

ECMCF defines postsecondary CTE pathways as a prescribed sequence of credit-bearing courses and work-based learning opportunities within an industry, sector, or occupation that lead to a continuum of portable credentials. The Foundation believes that high-quality postsecondary career pathways and programs have the following characteristics:

- provide credit-bearing courses;
- incorporate student-centered approaches;
- provide wraparound supports for learners;
- integrate work-based learning;
- build academic, technical, and employability skills;
- lead to industry-recognized credentials;
- allow for transferability and articulation; and
- employ evidence-based instructional practices for adult learners.

ECMCF characterizes adults as individuals over the age of 18 and places special emphasis on supporting programs for adults that are age 25 and older with limited or no education beyond high school.

Background

[ECMC Foundation](#) is a Los Angeles-based, nationally focused foundation whose mission is to inspire and to facilitate improvements that affect educational outcomes—especially among underserved populations—through evidence-based innovation. It is one of several affiliates under the [ECMC Group](#) enterprise based in Minneapolis, which together work to help students succeed.

The Foundation makes investments in two focus areas.

- College Success is focused on increasing the number of college students from historically underrepresented backgrounds, including low-income and first-generation populations, who pursue and attain bachelor's degrees.
- Career Readiness is committed to connecting adults with limited or no education beyond high school to industry-informed, accredited, and transferable, postsecondary CTE programs that are part of career pathways that lead to portable certificates or degrees.

Request

Through this project, ECMC Foundation expects the selected organization to identify which funders are supporting postsecondary career and technical education pathways and where there might be funding gaps or investment opportunities.

Tasks

- Identify the philanthropic and governmental organizations (hereafter referred to as funders) that support postsecondary CTE pathways and summarize how they each define career pathways
- Articulate the type of organization (e.g., education provider, community based organization) that is supported by each funder and what is being financed (e.g., model development, research, industry specific pathways)
- Analyze themes that arise through the aforementioned investigation into CTE pathways and build an understanding of opportunities for investment and/or further research, taking into consideration the focus of the [ECMC Foundation's Career Readiness portfolio](#)

Deliverables

- Prepare a written overview of all findings
- Develop infographics, charts, and tables for major takeaways
- Present findings to ECMC Foundation staff and/or partners
- Inform a potential funder convening

Administration

- Participate in regular check-in calls with ECMCF staff
- Travel may be required

The initial audience for this work will be ECMC Foundation staff who may decide to share the findings with other interested philanthropic partners. Eventually the deliverable, or a summary of the deliverable, may be shared with a public audience.

Proposals that are specific to an industry and/or geographical area will be considered.

ECMCF expects the timeline for this work to be 18 months or less with a budget of up to \$150,000.

Requirements

In order to be considered for this opportunity, interested organizations must submit a Letter of Inquiry to the ECMC Foundation by April 9, 2018 using the guiding questions below.

All submitted Letters of Inquiry will be considered for this opportunity and one organization will be selected to conduct the research, produce written and graphical deliverables, and present their findings to ECMC Foundation staff and partners. The selected consultant or organization will be contacted no later than April 23, 2018 and asked to submit a full grant proposal (including a more concrete action plan and budget) to ECMC Foundation by May 29, 2018.

Eligibility + Selection Criteria

Any organization with a commitment to education and background in research is eligible to submit a Letter of Inquiry. A small team from the Foundation will evaluate all submitted Letters of Inquiry. The team will select the organization with the strongest mission alignment and research agenda.

Process + Timeline

Letter of Inquiry Deadline	April 9, 2018
Winner Announced	April 23, 2018
Full Proposal Deadline	May 29, 2018
Funding Notification	August 31, 2018

Contact

Questions may be directed to Maggie Snyder (msnyder@ecmc.org). All final Letters of Inquiry must be submitted to her by email no later than 5:00 PM (PT) on April 9, 2018.

Incentivizing and Scaling Career Pathways Letters of Inquiry

Please prepare a brief (up to three pages) Letter of Inquiry addressing the following questions.

Organization Name and Contact

What is the name of the organization requesting funding and who will serve as the project leader if funding is received?

Organization

What is your/your organization's commitment to postsecondary education and/or career pathways for underserved adults? Do you or your organization have experience completing similar projects and if so, what were the outcomes of those projects?

Program Summary

What data will you need to complete this project? What is your strategy for collecting or gaining access to that data?

Program Timeline and Action Plan

What actions will you take over the course of the up-to-18 month grant period to collect or access data, codify and analyze themes, and create corresponding deliverables?

Budget Narrative

What funds are needed for staff time, data collection and analysis, and creation of deliverables?