



Awards for Innovation in Higher Education Program Planning Grant Proposal Guidelines

The 2016-2017 state budget includes funding for several initiatives focused on college readiness, access and success. These initiatives can help increase the number of California residents earning bachelor's degrees in the coming years. It is estimated the state needs 1.1 million additional bachelor degrees by 2030, given the changes in our economy. College Futures Foundation is dedicated to partnering with educational institutions to improve policies and practices, as well as assisting the K-12 and higher education systems to work together in ways that better support student success. We are particularly focused on closing the college readiness and bachelor degree attainment gaps for low-income students from groups historically under-represented in college success.

One of the higher education initiatives this year is the Awards for Innovation in Higher Education (described in [AB1602](#)). College Futures Foundation will support selected community colleges that intend to apply for these state resources with planning grants. The Awards and planning grant details are described below.

A. Awards for Innovation in Higher Education Program

The Awards for Innovation in Higher Education will be distributed on a competitive basis to community colleges through a process overseen by the California Department of Finance. These awards are intended to support:

"Innovations that reduce the time it takes students to complete degrees and credentials or reduce the total cost of attendance for students, or both, through any of the following:

- (1) Redesign of curriculum and instruction, such as implementation of three-year degrees.
- (2) Programs that allow students to make progress toward completion of degrees and credentials based on demonstration of knowledge and competencies, including military training, prior learning, and prior experiences.
- (3) Programs that make financial aid more accessible, including by increasing the number of students who apply for financial aid, or that reduce the costs of books and supplies."

B. College Futures Foundation Planning Grants

College Futures Foundation (“College Futures” or the “Foundation”) will provide mini planning grants to a selected group of community colleges that intend to apply for these state resources.¹ The mini grants will support community colleges to develop strategies, with their partners, for increasing student success that could be supported by state Innovation Award funds and to develop strong applications for submission.

During the planning phase, in addition to mini grants, selected colleges will have access to technical assistance that includes:

- Leveraging lessons learned and evidence from effective practices in each of the four areas referenced above
- Thought partnership about how the state funds can be leveraged to support the team’s vision and student success
- Thought partnership about programmatic or operational challenges relevant to the team’s goals
- Support in considering how proposed new activities intersect with other campus initiatives
- Facilitation of discussions among key stakeholders working together to develop proposals

College Futures will prioritize proposals from colleges who are pursuing or intend to pursue strategies that focus on:

- **Successful transitions:** Organizational and instructional strategies that ensure student readiness and effective transitions within structured academic pathways, particularly from high school to college, and from community college to four-year colleges and universities.
- **Accelerated remediation:** Partnerships with high schools to: 1) align expectations and reduce the need for remediation; and 2) move students quickly into credit-bearing courses so as to reduce the time and cost involved in achieving degrees.
- **Increasing transfer rates:** Strategies that intentionally seek to: 1) increase the number and percentage of students earning an Associate Degree for Transfer, and 2) smooth the transition to four-year institutions.
- **Tracking student progress and outcomes:** The collection and analysis of data by race and gender to inform efforts to improve time to degree and reduce attainment gaps.

¹ Through a separate set of proposal guidelines, College Futures also is inviting proposals from community college districts preparing to apply for funds through the California College Promise Innovation Grant Program ([AB1741](#)).

C. Grant Request

If you are interested in submitting a proposal for a planning grant, please contact College Futures Foundation consultant Amy Dominguez-Arms at amydarms@gmail.com. We will schedule conversations with interested colleges to learn more about your plans. The following step could be a request for a concept paper or for a full proposal. Section D below details the information that would be requested for a planning grant proposal.

Proposals will be accepted between October 24 – November 10, 2016. Once we receive your proposal, we may follow up with further questions. Decisions on the planning grants to be awarded will be communicated between November 7 – 18, 2016.

D. Proposal Guidelines

Once a proposal has been invited, 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, or only, 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 5 pages. Clarity and concision is of greatest importance.

1. Organizational Rationale & Background

- Discuss the capacity of the lead entity and other key partners to develop and, if they receive an award, implement the proposed plan. If appropriate, describe what the lead entity and other key partners are planning to commit in terms of resources towards the planning process.
- Please discuss how the parameters for the Awards for Innovation in Higher Education align with your current organizational goals and/or aspirations.

2. Planning Process Overview

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

- Describe your initial ideas for allocating the new state resources and how these ideas either build on proven practices in the field or stem from a sound rationale for a new approach. (The initial ideas presented in this proposal certainly may be refined and/or amended during the planning period.)
- Discuss how your proposed approach will affect institutional practices in ways that increase the number and percentage of low-income students who are ready for transfer to a four-year university after not more than three years in a community college. If you are planning to focus attention on any particular sub-population(s) as a result of your data, please describe.

- Describe your initial ideas on how you will assess the proposed approach to ascertain its impact on students; please describe the data you plan to track by student race and gender.
- Who will be involved in the planning process towards the development of the plan that would be the basis for the Innovation Award application.
- What will be the areas of focus during the planning process and what do you aim to accomplish by the end of the planning period?
- Approximately 2-4 hours of custom technical assistance may be available during the grant period. Technical assistance will be provided by [Education First](#), the [Center for Urban Education](#) and others based on the needs described. If applicable, please specify key questions, challenges or technical assistance needs that you would like help to address.
- Discuss how the plans developed during this period might be utilized if your application is not selected for state funding.
- Describe the specific data and/or indicators you plan to collect and analyze as part of the planning process.

3. 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 completing the planning process.

4. Project Budget Narrative

- Indicate the total planning budget and the specific amount of that total requested from the Foundation. Please note that as the planning grants are intended to support colleges' planning process, indirect costs will not be included in the grant.