Support Partner for Service Design & Delivery Initiative

Glossary of Terms

Support Partner Scope of Work and Qualifications

Backbone organization

An organization, individual, or team of individuals that provide network members with services that enable them to connect, align, and produce.
The backbone's purpose is not to govern or direct the network, but to manage the network for the members.
Sourced: Network of Impact

Entity

BMGF's PS team is looking for an entity that could be comprised of an organization(s) or individual(s) that would serve as the Community of Practice backbone organization to guide and support our SD&D initiative moving forward. In this role, the entity will be responsible for creating a seamless approach to accomplishing the SD&D goals. This backbone would be executing on the five specific functions outlined in the RFP Scope of Work. The backbone may subcontract with others to provide one or more of the key functions or may provide these functions through dedicated staffing. We anticipate and expect that organizations and/or individuals may partner together to effectively serve as the backbone. To this end, we welcome joint proposals and provide no limits on the number of partners that may work together. We do plan, however, to make a single grant and/or contract and so will ask any entity applying in a partnership to identify which organization would be receiving the funding.

Learning Agenda

Developing a prioritized set of learning outcomes and questions that would be based on the shared needs of the collective and individual community groups in support of building their capabilities for the achievement of their strategy goals.

Servant Leader

 A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the "top of the pyramid," servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.
Sourced: Greenleaf

Learning-Forward

In this context, learning-forward means continuing to focus on forward progress. While we anticipate many challenges and even failures along the way, we seek to take the insights from our work to continue to improve our collective understanding.

Network Theory

There are many definitions that could applied here, but specifically we interested in a networked approach to change. Many traditional programmatic partners form short-term partnerships with superficially similar organizations to execute a single program, exchange a few resources, or attract funding. In contrast, networked nonprofits or ecosystems, forge long-term partnerships with trusted peers to tackle their missions on multiple fronts.

Four principles of a networked ecosystem:

1. **Mission, not organization:** Advancing the mission takes priority over advancing the organization. Leaders adopt strategies and tactics to achieve the mission, not solely to stimulate organizational growth.
2. **Trust, not control.** Trust and shared values are far more important than formal control mechanisms such as contracts or accountability systems.
3. **Humility, not brand.** Organizations work alongside their peers as equals and willingly take a backseat when their partners are in a better position to lead.
4. **Node, not hub.** Build constellations, not stars. Those who embrace the network mindset see their organizations as one part of a larger web of activity directed toward a cause, not as the hub of the action.

Source: [The Networked Nonprofit](#)

*Equity First Partner

Equity-first partners include organizations and individuals that prioritize supporting success for racially minoritized and low-income students as reflected by: (1) Mission, goals, programming, research agendas, (2) Organizational make-up or diversity (board, senior leader(s), management, staff), and (3) Demonstrated success with, knowledge and respect of racially minoritized and low-income communities/ constituency.

*Bill &Melinda Gates Foundation working operational definition of an Equity First Partner

PS Strategy

Capabilities

Skills and abilities an effective intermediary for scale must have to effectively drive institutional transformation at scale.

Capability Building

Refers to the process of developing these skills or abilities through this process; our primary purpose is to sustainably increase the ability of an intermediary to set and achieve goals more effectively and efficiently over the long-term.

Institutional Transformation

Understanding institutional transformation in all its complexity begins with defining the term. For years, the field has gravitated toward the idea of transformation, but has yet to coalesce around what it really means in practice. A strong definition, developed with and by higher education partners, can help keep transformation from becoming an amorphous buzzword.

10/29/2021

The development of the transformation definition below puts a stake in the ground about why we need to reimagine higher education, and for whom. A definition helps to signal critical facets of transformation for the field, and helps the foundation and its partners create and evaluate an innovation pipeline of tools, methods, and resources. The hope is that this definition serves as the standard for innovation and excellence, paving the way for others.

Service Design and Delivery Initiative

SD&D initiative was launched in late 2018 to create a marketplace where we bring together our key partners, our institutional intermediaries, solution network intermediaries and providers and capacities providers, to work together in an aligned ecosystem that focuses on scaling institutional transformation. We are deepening relationships and our understanding of institutional transformation through on the ground practice.

Intermediaries

An organization that acts as a connector between two entities. Within our strategy we have two types of intermediaries: Intermediaries for Scale that connect institutions to service providers (via the Solution Network Intermediaries). Solution Network Intermediaries that connect service providers to institutions (via the Intermediaries for Scale).

Solutions

Solutions are evidence-based interventions or set of interventions including practices, technology products, policy changes and the institutional improvement processes to effectively implement them, that address key loss and momentum points for Black, Latino/a/x, Indigenous students, and students from low-income backgrounds along their higher education journey. Our foundation funded solutions are Advising, Digital Learning and Reforming Developmental Education.

Capacities

The operational strengths of an institution that enable progress on the work of transformation. They are inclusive of an institution's systems, resources, skills, people, and processes required for generating progress on continuous improvement for student success, closing equity gaps, and generating value for students. To date, there are five proven capacities that have been shown to be critical for institutional transformation: Leadership, Strategic Finance, Data/IR, Information Technology, and Institutional Policy. When key capacities are developed, they allow the institution to chart its course for the future, implement and sustain key Solutions and Pathways elements, and reconfigure their routines to allow people to build institution-wide skills to drive toward a common goal.

Guided Pathways

The Guided Pathways model is an example of an integrated framework for institutional transformation. It is based on a set of design principles for an institution to systemically redesign the student experience from initial connection to the institution to completion, with changes to program structure, new student intake, instruction, and support services.

An integrated framework is an institution's approach to operationalizing transformation.
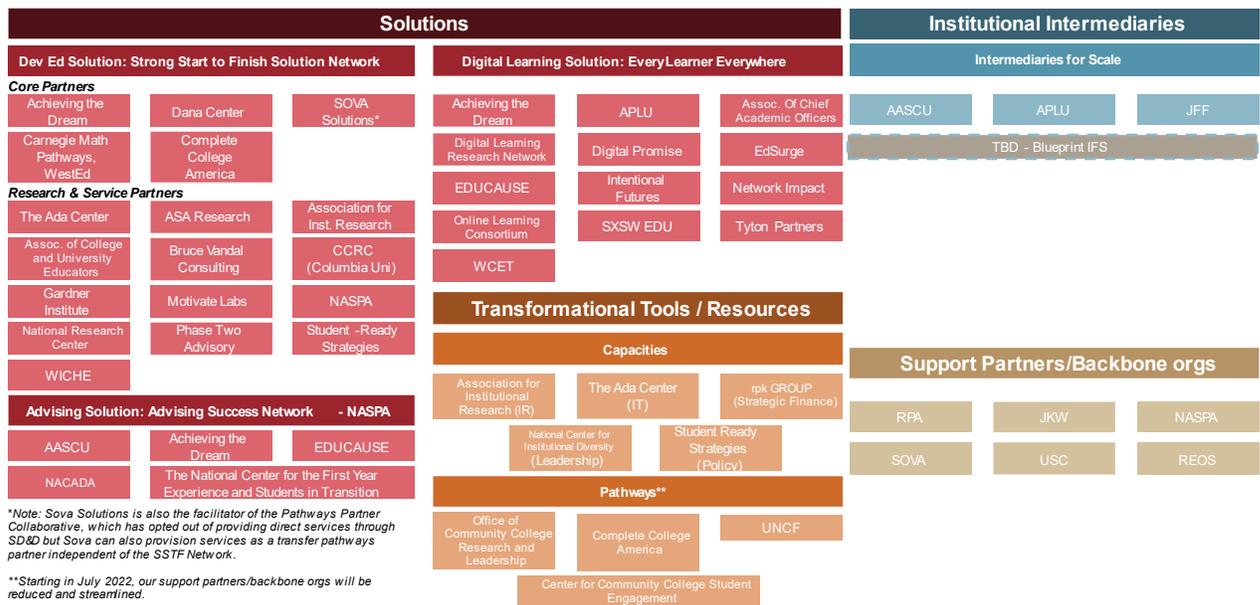
Service Providers

Service providers have expertise in supporting institutions in developing a specific content area (i.e. an integrated framework, information technology, advising reform, courseware, etc.).

Ecosystem

Full Ecosystem

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Solutions						Institutional Intermediaries		
Dev Ed Solution: Strong Start to Finish Solution Network			**Digital Learning Solution: Every Learner Everywhere**			**Intermediaries for Scale**		
Core Partners			Achieving the Dream	APLU	Assoc. Of Chief Academic Officers	AASCU	APLU	JFF
Achieving the Dream	Dana Center	SOVA Solutions*	Digital Learning Research Network	Digital Promise	EdSurge	TBD - Blueprint IFS		
Carnegie Math Pathways, WestEd	Complete College America		EDUCAUSE	Intentional Futures	Network Impact			
Research & Service Partners			Online Learning Consortium	SXSW EDU	Tyton Partners			
The Ada Center	ASA Research	Association for Inst. Research	WCET					
Assoc. of College and University Educators	Bruce Vandal Consulting	CCRC (Columbia Uni)	**Transformational Tools / Resources**					
Gardner Institute	Motivate Labs	NASPA	**Capacities**			**Support Partners/Backbone orgs**		
National Research Center	Phase Two Advisory	Student -Ready Strategies	Association for Institutional Research (IR)	The Ada Center (IT)	rpk GROUP (Strategic Finance)	RPA	JKW	NASPA
WICHE			National Center for Institutional Diversity (Leadership)	Student Ready Strategies (Policy)		SOVA	USC	REOS
Advising Solution: Advising Success Network — NASPA			**Pathways****					
AASCU	Achieving the Dream	EDUCAUSE	Office of Community College Research and Leadership	Complete College America	UNCF			
NACADA	The National Center for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition		Center for Community College Student Engagement					

Note: Sova Solutions is also the facilitator of the Pathways Partner Collaborative, which has opted out of providing direct services through SD&D but Sova can also provision services as a transfer pathways partner independent of the SSTF Network.

**Starting in July 2022, our support partners/backbone orgs will be reduced and streamlined.

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Community Groups

The community groups are comprised of the sub-groups listed above. They include our Solution Network Intermediaries, Capacities providers, Pathways providers, and Intermediaries for Scale.

Intermediaries for Scale

The Intermediaries for Scale (IFS) have direct responsibility for guiding multiple institutions through an integrated transformation process, including assessing and articulating institutional needs, while operating in the Proof of Scale portfolio. They are responsible for helping institutions implement integrated transformation and align their support with other multiple campus level change efforts. IFS ensure that their institutions experience integrated supports and are charged with developing (and eventually implementing) an integrated framework for institutional transformation. This includes providing guidance and overseeing cross-solution and capacity support.

Solution Network Intermediaries

The Solutions Network Intermediaries (SNIs) enable institutional integration support through their direct responsibility for in-network solution provider integration and coordination with capacity providers.

4

They are responsible for ensuring that solution providers deliver quality, coordinated support and learning at scale in each solution area—including supporting providers to situate their services within an integrated framework for institutional transformation, connected to other solutions and to institutional capacities (rather than as one-off services).

Solution Network:

Network of individual solutions providers that create and improve a specific solution and develop implementation tools and services. Each solution network is focused on one type of solution – Advising, Digital Learning and Reforming Developmental Education.

Pathways Service Provider

A pathways service provider offers an array of supports to build capacity and increase student success efforts at institutions by offering services that support planning, implementation, scale and evaluation and sustainability at any stage of the student journey.

Capacity Provider

A capacity provider works to provide insights and implementation services to help institutions improve their capacities for transformation. Capacity providers may include organizational change and leadership development firms, innovative individual leaders and membership organizations whose skills comport to one of the identified capacities that are essential for institutional transformation.

Steering Committee

The Service Design & Delivery Steering Committee is an elected board of partners (five-six partners) that serve six month terms. They act as the primary governance board for the SD&D ecosystem and provide guidance to the foundation on critical issues affecting the ecosystem.

Foundation Relationship Managers

Foundation relationship managers are organization's point of contacts. They are often referred to as their program officers. If an organization has multiple grants/contracts with the foundation, one program officer is often appointed the relationship manager title and should be the main contact for non-investment specific questions and concerns.

Other Terms

Learning Tracks

To carry forward strategy-related conversations for the SD&D work between convenings and monthly partner meetings. These Learning tracks are partner led and project managed by the backbone support partner. Learning tracks have been established in the following areas:

Needs Assessment and Integration
Service Marketing, Coordination and Iteration
Equity and Racial Justice
Quality Ask/Quality Service