

Frequently Asked Questions

Last and final update: May 26, 2022

Questions asked during 5/12 Webinar

Applicant requirements

1. My team is based out of a university where principal investigators must have a PhD. Must we appoint someone with a PhD to lead the project? There are no foundation requirements that would require a project lead, or primary contact, to have a PhD.
2. Would the lead organization need to have 501(c)(3) status? No.
3. What budget information is needed for the concept paper? Financial documents are not required at the concept paper stage.

Concept paper guidance

4. What does the full proposal application entail? All guidance for the concept paper and full application will be posted to the [homepage](#) for this opportunity.
5. Should the concept paper include ideas for the content of the research agenda? Not necessarily. The applicant should describe an approach to building and executing a research agenda focused on equitable student success and facilitating learning amongst the stakeholders.
6. How much detail on research activities should be in the concept paper? The research activities will be developed in response to the specifics of the agenda, but it will be helpful to understand how the applicant approaches research, their research capacities, and the way the applicant would engage stakeholders.
7. Should we focus on one solution in the concept paper? You can speak to all three broadly, as the focus of the concept paper is to understand how you would build, execute and share findings from the research agenda, not necessarily to display your understanding of each solution. Applicants should convey an understanding of the higher education context and the inequities therein. An understanding of open-access institutions and minority serving institutions is a plus.
8. Will one proposal be selected across the three strategies? Yes

Collaborating with key stakeholders

9. Please say more about the relationship that you envision between this grantee and the SNI leads? The SNI leads are one of the key stakeholders, in addition to the solution program officers, intermediaries and the institutions. The relationship we expect, through this grant, is that the research partner addresses the research needs of the key stakeholders, and that the research findings inform grant making and the provision of services. Effective collaboration will be a key indicator of success for this relationship.
10. How do you imagine the collaboration working? What is an example of a request from the SNI and how the grantee would respond? This is not a grant where the research partner is beholden to the SNIs to answer individual research questions as they arise, it is an effort to co-develop an annual research agenda to provide key stakeholders in higher education with the information they need to promote student success.
11. What happens if the stakeholders aren't ready to hear or prepared for a particular finding of the research? This will not be a problem. This is a learning grant, and the goal is to uncover obstacles and opportunities in the implementation of solution strategies.

Solution Networks.

12. Please say more about the types of evidence based solutions funders are supporting? Using developmental education as an example, there is a focus on placement, alignment and acceleration. The developmental education strategy promotes multiple measures, corequisite reform and math pathways.
13. Can you provide background on the digital learning and advising strategies? Yes. See the [Backgrounder on Solution Network Intermediaries](#).
14. What is meant by *scaling* of solutions? The BMGF postsecondary strategy is to dramatically increase student success by focusing on institutional transformation at scale. Using developmental education as an example, this research would help us understand the opportunities and obstacles for institutions to implement multiple measures for placement, math pathways and/or co-requisite courses for all entering students, as well as the obstacles and opportunities for service providers in supporting these institutional efforts.
15. Is part of the research to identify how or what is needed to grow the number of institutions utilizing the evidence based strategies vis-a-vis the solution networks? Yes.
16. Where are the SNIs in the stages of their work? Network intermediaries have been active in this capacity since 2017. Strong Start to Finish, for example, has been engaged in implementing and scaling developmental education reform for years, and the next phase of work is to accelerate implementation and scale with a focus on equity.

The identified SNIs (Strong Start to Finish, Every Learner Everywhere, and NASPA) are intermediary organizations with a number of service providers. The SNI helps to coordinate services, but the service providers work with the campuses to deliver those services.

Questions asked during 5/17/22-5/19/22 office hours

Applicant requirements and concept paper guidance

17. What capacities should I elevate? The project requires (1) facilitation and collaboration skills to develop a research agenda and to advance key stakeholders' knowledge and (2) research skills to execute the research agenda and be able to describe how solution implementation shapes the experiences and outcomes of priority student groups.
18. How should we describe our own capacities? Give a brief overview of the skills and expertise your team has. If you are invited to the full application stage, you will have a chance to expand on this brief description with individual biographies.
19. Can I name myself or highlight my individual skillsets? Yes (see questions 17 and 18).
20. How is the concept paper different from the full application? The concept paper will ask for more specific details on you or your team's potential to address the two requirements listed in question 17. The concept paper is intentionally a high level overview to provide an understanding of how you would approach this project.
21. How many people will be invited to the full application? There is no limit on how many concepts will be advanced to the full application phase.
22. Will there be one grantee? Yes (see question 8).
23. Are organizations that are already involved with BMGF as Intermediaries for Scale eligible to apply? The role of an Intermediary or service provider is different from that of a potential research partner, but the research division of an Intermediary would be eligible to apply for this opportunity.
24. Should applicants already have any desired partnerships or additional staffing in place? They should have all the needed capacities to meet the grant requirements in place by the start of the project.
25. Will another similar opportunity be made available in the future? We don't know, but check the [programs](#) website regularly for more information

Project-related questions

26. Will the selected grantee have access to historical data? Selected grantees will be provided with any relevant contextual information during the onboarding process, but this is a new grant and there is no historical data.
27. Will the grantee determine the research activities? Yes. The research questions will be co-developed with the key stakeholders, but it is up to the research partner to determine how best to answer those questions.
28. Who are the SNIs? Strong Start to Finish, Every Learner Everywhere, and NASPA. See the [Backgrounder on Solution Network Intermediaries](#).
29. Are the focus institutions already determined? Yes, but they do not need to be referenced in the concept paper or application. Potential research partners must be able to build relationships with and facilitate data collection in priority institutions (Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Primarily Black Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institution and other Minority Serving Institutions).
30. Are there past issues with this co-developed research agenda model? No.
31. Is the goal to develop systemic change or to understand implementation? To understand implementation, this research is designed to help the key stakeholders develop policies, practices and tools to create change.

Questions asked via email

32. Can a 2-3 page appendix be included with bios? No (see question 18).

Questions asked via email after 5/19

33. Is this opportunity only for U.S.-based organizations? Yes.

Learn More

Will you still be accepting questions after May 16th, when the RFP is released?

We will answer questions publicly via an updated FAQ between May 16th and May 26th. You may ask questions via until May 24th at 5pm ET, and the final FAQ will be released on May 26th