



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **GRADUATE: All Students Successful**

**Maximum \$70,000/year for up to 3 Years**

#### **Foundation Vision**

**Empower the people of Wyoming to lead healthy lives in thriving communities.**

#### **Foundation Mission**

**To create or cause change primarily for the benefit of the people of the State of Wyoming through the support of science, education and charity.**

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#### **Purpose**

The John P. Ellbogen Foundation has long supported education initiatives that meet the comprehensive needs of students, and equip them to build a life of personal well-being that leads to responsible, engaged citizens who contribute to Wyoming's economy, raise healthy and strong families, and participate in civic and service community life. After many months of the pandemic, the Foundation is ready to invest in grantee partners to help construct or strengthen community capacity to enhance the pure potential of children, youth and families. The Foundation will provide support and funding to a community-based coalition that is comprised of essential partners that accelerate implementation. The coalition must collaboratively implement and sustain strategies as part of a larger systemic design that: (1) align goals and services in response to the needs of children and youth to advance the well-being and success of students, (2) strengthen the services and supports necessary for more students, especially students who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, have experienced trauma or have a disability, to complete high school with a diploma AND (3) increase the capacity of students who do graduate to succeed in their first year of postsecondary education/training or their first year of employment.

August 2021

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## **Introduction**

The John P. Ellbogen Foundation is a private, not-for-profit family foundation that was funded from the life earnings of John P. “Jack” Ellbogen through his estate in 2001. The vision and mission of the Foundation are a testament to Jack’s ethos, and guide grant awards to entities within the state that work diligently to make the quality of life better for Wyoming citizens.

The rationale behind this grant opportunity is that the Foundation Board realizes the tremendous social and economic impacts that dropping out of school has on individual student’s lives, the health of our communities and the well-being of the State of Wyoming. The Foundation further recognizes that communities are best positioned to come together to solve the challenges facing the students who live and ultimately thrive in their schools. The wisdom and collective action of people from within communities are central to the design and implementation of this grant; there is not just one good idea that will keep students in school until they receive a diploma. Successful grantees will develop a plan to strengthen supports and services specifically designed to meet the needs of students over time and across grade levels, and will acknowledge that some students, including those who are vulnerable, underserved, have experienced trauma or have a disability, will benefit from targeted strategies that provide opportunity and responsibility for their success. The Foundation is seeking leadership and commitment from community coalitions that will provide a continuum of services and supports to students that will produce the desired outcomes and impacts.

The John P. Ellbogen Foundation has identified three broad outcomes for investment in Wyoming communities and schools. The outcomes of proposals from the GRADUATE: All Students Successful grant must ultimately (1) align goals and services in response to the needs of children and youth to advance the well-being and success of students, (2) strengthen the services and supports necessary for more students, especially students who are vulnerable, underserved, have experienced trauma or have a disability, to complete high school with a diploma AND (3) increase the capacity of students who do graduate to succeed in their first year of postsecondary education/training or their first year of employment.

This funding is meant to supplement not supplant funds for current systemic efforts to raise graduation rates and promote student success and well-being.

## **Rationale and Research**

The United States of America is an idea brought to life as a revolutionary nation. It is founded on progressive propositions set forth in the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution. The most noble of these ideals is that we are all created equal and are endowed with the inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. With these lofty goals as a north star, one of the greatest experiments in governance was launched – a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

For this new government to be sustained, its citizens needed to become learned thinkers who would then preserve and protect its principles and chart the course of the nation. Public education became the keystone to self-governance. The role of a quality public education in today’s

complex world is more essential than ever in preparing the students who enter the K-12 system as eager learners to exit with a diploma as responsible individuals who will use their education to maximize the opportunities, freedoms and fundamental rights this country offers. The promises of this nation become real and graduates become stewards of the government and nation.

The story of and promises for those who leave school before they earn their diploma is vastly different. Sociological and psychological theories view dropout as the end result of a long-term process of academic disengagement that is influenced by both in- and out-of-school factors and that manifest early in life as well as during time frames closer to dropout. Studies have linked leaving school early to a number of unalterable, background characteristics such as race/ethnicity, gender, immigration status, limited English proficiency, and having limited cognitive abilities or some other type of disability (physical, emotional or behavioral). A student's family background and home experience exert a powerful influence over education outcomes, including dropping out of school. Socioeconomic status, parental education level, and family structure (single-parent or stepparent), family conflict, family financial or health problems, and residential moves can have a negative impact on staying in school. Students with increased out-of-school responsibilities like being a teen parent, taking a job to help out his or her family, or caring for siblings increases the likelihood of that a student will leave school before graduating. Additionally, student academic indicators such as poor grades, low achievement test scores, and grade retention during elementary, middle, and high school are linked to an increased likelihood of high school dropout. Finally, indicators of school engagement such as attendance, classroom behavior, perceptions of school belongingness, extracurricular involvement, and adoption of high-risk attitudes, values and behaviors are also correlated to dropout.

Wyoming's high school graduation rate has stagnated for several years, even as public high school graduation rates in the United States have increased. Students who earn a high school diploma have access to significantly expanded career and educational opportunities, and achieve better outcomes in education and employment that in turn influence their long-term health, well-being and success. When students leave high school with a diploma:

- They are more likely to graduate from college which means their life expectancy increases by five years.
- Their access to health care and healthy lifestyles increases.
- Their mental health, self-esteem and psychological well-being are better and remain better over the life course.
- Their employment opportunities increase alongside their annual earning potential that provides them with better opportunity to be self-sufficient. High school graduates are more likely to contribute to their community, pay taxes, buy homes and transportation, recreate and strengthen the economy at the local and state levels.

Conversely, dropping out of high school has clear and measurable adverse consequences for both individuals and society:

- Poverty rates for students who drop out of high school are two times higher than college graduates.
- The unemployment rate for individuals without a high school diploma is 4% higher than the national average.

- Out of millions of jobs recently created, 99% went to individuals with some college participation.
- High school graduates earn \$10,000 more annually than those who dropout; the lifetime earnings for a student who does not graduate with a diploma is \$260,000 less than person with a diploma.
- 80% of those incarcerated are high school dropouts; the risk of incarceration is 3.5 times higher for individuals that leave school early than those who persistent through graduation.
- Young women who dropout are nine times more likely to become a young, single mom, living in poverty and in need public assistance.
- Estimates suggest that high school dropouts costs taxpayers \$292,000 over their lifetime.

When educators and community members come together to address the systemic issues of a K-12 education that culminates with a diploma and graduation, greater numbers of students will attain the social, emotional, behavioral, intellectual and knowledge talents required to graduate and successfully transition to responsible adulthood, citizenship, employment, and/or a college or a university. It is incumbent on all citizens and organizations who believe in the pure potential of our young, value our democracy and are dedicated to creating opportunities to thrive for all individuals, to strategically invest in and support the educational experiences of every student wherever learning occurs.

The critical question to answer then is, “what can community/school coalitions do to change the odds for all students, especially those who are at-risk of dropping out, and positively impact graduation rates?” Bryan Goodwin states the question like this, “In light of the hundreds (if not thousands) of things we might do, are we doing what matters most?”

In *Changing the Odds*, Mr. Goodwin speaks to high-leverage, high-pay-off areas for school systems. To qualify for this level of success, strategies must have an effect size greater than  $d=.40$  to ensure that the strategy is more effective than what a teacher themselves might accomplish. Effect size is the measure of strength or overall impact of an initiative or intervention. Bryan Goodwin describes the results of New Zealand researcher, John Hattie, who identified that an effect size of  $d=.40$  is the “hinge point” where the effect size is strong enough for educators to see “real world change” in student achievement. It’s the threshold point at which an intervention exceeds the average effect teachers have on student achievement which is  $d=.20$  to  $d=.40$ .

The recommendations in the Goodwin book focus on the areas within the school to most likely have a positive effect on student success. They are:

- a guaranteed challenging, engaging curriculum
- curricular pathways to success
- whole-child supports
- high-performance school cultures, and
- data-driven, high-reliability systems.

The most powerful strategy identified by both Goodwin and Hattie in *Changing the Odds* and one which the Foundation has strongly supported through its work is that “the most important

way school systems can change the odds for students is to make sure every child receives the benefit of a great teacher, every year in every classroom.” From Hattie’s research and a meta-analysis of numerous other research projects, three behaviors that distinguish effective teachers stand out above the rest. Highly effective teachers challenge their students, create positive classroom environments by developing strong relationships with their students and are intentional about their teaching. They know the how, when and why of what they are teaching. Additionally, highly effective educators contribute create early warning systems from readily available student data to identify students at risk of missing key educational milestones, to diagnose the needs of students who are at-risk, and to identify interventions that may help students get back on track to graduate.

The National Dropout Prevention Center (NDPC) has a mission to increase graduation rates through research and evidence-based solutions. The Center cites that students report a variety of reasons for dropping out of school, and insists that the solutions for reducing dropout and increase graduation rates are multidimensional. NDPC has identified 15 Effective Strategies that have the most positive impact on reducing school dropout. These strategies are interdependent, work well together and frequently overlap. Although they can be implemented as stand-alone strategies, positive outcomes will result when communities implement action plans that encompass most or all of these strategies. These strategies have been successful at all school levels from PK – 12 and in rural, suburban, and urban settings. Strategies are grouped into four general categories as follows:

- Foundational Strategies
  - Systemic Approach
  - School-Community Collaboration
  - Safe Learning Environments
- Early Interventions
  - Family Engagement
  - Early Childhood Education
  - Early Literacy Development
- Basic Core Strategies
  - Mentoring/Tutoring
  - Service-Learning
  - Alternative Schooling
  - After-School/Out-of-School Opportunities
- Managing and Improving Instruction
  - Professional Development
  - Active Learning
  - Educational Technology
  - Individualized Instruction
  - Career and Technical Education (CTE)

To learn more about these strategies, go to <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies>.

## **Grant Actions Overview**

The Board of the John P. Ellbogen Foundation supports comprehensive and systemic efforts to improve graduation rates for all students, especially students who are vulnerable, underserved, have experienced trauma, or have a disability. It follows then, that the Board will evaluate proposals and give weight to those that provide clear and convincing evidence that:

- Schools and communities have come together to form a broad-based community coalition that will:
  - align goals and implement high-leverage, high-pay-off strategies across grade levels for a cumulative impact on student well-being, success and graduation rates,
  - strengthen cross-sector and cross-setting partnerships and establish equal voices between school districts and community allies,
  - share in learning opportunities to increase understanding of needs, commitment to strategies, and to strengthen implementation.
- Two-way communication begins during early childhood and is ongoing within and across the community – especially with students and families – to:
  - improve school – home connections,
  - share strategies to support healthy child growth and development,
  - inform them of the pathways to positive student education and employment outcomes,
  - share about support strategies to address experiences and challenges that may delay achievement of those outcomes, and
  - strengthen support for and actively engage the public in implementation.
- Student voices are an integral and consistent component of implementation to understand what students want and need for their own success in school.
- Meaningful quantitative and qualitative data is or will be collected and used to:
  - understand existing strategies,
  - identify students early who need additional supports and to design timely and effective preventions and interventions based on their needs,
  - to measure growth, progress or impact,
  - inform an annual review of strategies and results,
  - to justify modifications and changes to the operation of an initiative.
- Students will have the skills or supports to successfully transition from high school to postsecondary education or careers.
- Evaluation processes and an annual in-depth review of the strategies and results lead to recommended modifications for implementation.
- Strategies give consideration to implementation across all grade levels, meet the identified needs of students and their families, and have clear outcomes or impacts that leverage community partners within and outside of the school to exceed the impact that individual educators or organizations could have accomplished on their own. For example, an outcome for coordination of early literacy development could be that all students would be reading on grade level in third grade. An outcome for community-based systems could be an increase in the number of affordable and accessible after-school and summer enhancement programs that eliminate information loss and inspire student interest in a variety of

areas. An outcome for safe learning environments could be an increase in mental health services and supports within the classroom and for individual students that enhance positive social attitudes and effective interpersonal skills in all students.

#### **Technical Assistance Contact**

**In addition to this document, a evaluation rubric and scoring directions are available as separate documents on the Foundation’s website. The Foundation highly recommends that proposal authors read and use the evaluation rubric as a guide for a successful proposal. For more information, to ask questions regarding this grant opportunity or for technical assistance please contact the individual listed below.**

Becca Steinhoff

[Ellbogenfoundation.wy@gmail.com](mailto:Ellbogenfoundation.wy@gmail.com) – 307-575-2443



## **Grant Proposal Guidance**

The John P. Ellbogen Foundation intends to pilot this initiative in up to ten Wyoming communities that are different in size, student population composition and geographic locations.

### **Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants are Wyoming school districts or community organizations who are committed to working across their communities to achieve grant outcomes.

IRS rules and regulations require the Foundation to grant to non-profit entities with 501c3 status or governmental agencies. Therefore, the coalition must include a non-profit or governmental partner who is designated as the financial sponsor for this grant. The sponsor is legally responsible for ensuring that the proposal falls within its own tax-exempt purposes.

### **Award Amount**

The maximum amount awarded to each successful applicant will be \$70,000 for each year over a three-year period. The Board's intent is to provide funding for an initial year of planning and implementation, and for two additional years of implementation to give adequate time for the community team to prove the initiative is successful in meeting its stated outcomes. Some planning and analysis activities may need to occur prior to the submission of a grant application. **The Board requires assurances that the initiative will be sustained after the three-year funding period.**

**Funding for each year is contingent upon meaningful implementation of grant work. The Foundation requires an annual report of grant activities and progress. Reports are reviewed by the Foundation Board before grant funds for years two and three are released.**

### **Matching Funds Requirement**

A 30% cash or in-kind match is required for each year of grant funding. The match should be calculated based on the total grant amount: matching dollars + Ellbogen dollars. The maximum Ellbogen Foundation award is \$70,000 which requires a match of \$30,000 (\$100,000 total grant amount).

Planning, needs discovery, coalition building, and similar activities that take place before a grant is applied for may account for up to \$5,000 of a year 1 grant match. These expenses are the sole responsibility of an applicant and/or community, and will not be reimbursed or otherwise paid for by the Foundation.

### **Sustainability**

The grant funds will support the development and operations of a systemic initiative that should continue until the stated outcomes are achieved. The Foundation recognizes that budgets are tight

and that funding conditions for new initiatives are precarious, but values conversations about sustainability of critical work to ensure student success. It is crucial that the applicant recognizes this expectation and includes in their proposal planning strategies to address sustainability both in terms of leadership and ongoing revenues/resources.

### **Use of Funds**

Funds may be used for expected and reasonable start-up and operational costs for personnel, including salary and benefits, professional development, materials/supplies, and fees for contracted professional services that directly support the implementation of identified strategies. **The grant is to be invested in direct services to students.** Please ensure that 95% of the total grant amount is invested into direct services and supports for students. **Grant funds must supplement, not supplant existing infrastructures and expenditures to meet the outcomes of the proposal.**

### **Ineligible Activities**

- Short term programs that are unlikely to be sustained
- Capital construction
- Duplication of existing programs and/or services
- National conferences
- Travel
- Political activity
- Contributions
- Vehicle purchase

### **Application Process**

The grant proposal and supporting documents are posted on the John P. Ellbogen Foundation website, [www.ellbogenfoundation.org](http://www.ellbogenfoundation.org). **Completed proposals are limited to 15 pages, including the proposal design, budget documents and attachments.**

Completed proposals may be submitted until funds have been fully allocated. We will announce grant recipients as awards are made and update continuing opportunities on our website.

Proposals must meet a level of excellence on the associated rubric to be funded. Completed documents must be submitted via email attachment to:

Mary Garland, President - [mleg0@yahoo.com](mailto:mleg0@yahoo.com)

Becca Steinhoff, Executive Director – [ellbogenfoundation.wy@gmail.com](mailto:ellbogenfoundation.wy@gmail.com)

Proposals will be read and evaluated by a team of at least three individuals. The evaluation team may contact potential grantees for more information if necessary. The Foundation will notify applicants within 3 weeks of receipt of their proposal on the status of funding.

## Evaluation of Proposals

Scoring of the proposals will utilize a rubric with a point scale of 1-4. The rubric can be found on the Foundation's website, and is an essential guide for the authors of the proposal. The rubric will support evaluators to look for:

- A well-documented and compelling justification of needs that uses relevant data for rationale and accurately represents strengths and needs.
- Distinct description(s) of the targeted population(s) who will benefit from grant work; corresponding changes that result for populations are meaningful and achievable.
- Thorough identification of a coalition of allies as well as the lead organization(s) providing initiative leadership and accountability; recognition of a transparent and thoughtful problem-solving process to guide collaboration.
- A comprehensive and systemic project design that is both ambitious and achievable.
- A comprehensive and relevant project evaluation plan that includes both qualitative and quantitative evidence to validate progress and success.
- The cost-effectiveness of the budget over the three years; a corresponding budget narrative that details otherwise ambiguous calculations and/or expenditures.
- Documented details of a cash or in-kind match.
- Clear and direct connections between the statement of needs, the goals, strategies and actions, and the intended outcomes.
- Evidence of the capacity of leadership and coalition allies to develop and implement the grant proposal and achieve the identified outcomes within the given grant period.
- The alignment of the proposal to advance the vision, mission, and intent of the John P. Ellbogen Foundation.

*A scoring rubric and scoring directions are available as separate documents on the Foundation's website. **The Foundation highly recommends that proposal authors read and use the evaluation rubric as a guide for a successful proposal.***

## Reporting Requirements

The Foundation requires an annual report of activities, outcomes, and expenditures approximately twelve months after a grant is received. Foundation staff will communicate reporting timeframes with grantees well in advance of deadlines. More frequent reporting or communication may be negotiated at the time of the grant award. If a significant modification needs to be made to the project plan, the Foundation requires notification and a discussion about the proposed amendments prior to the implementation of the modifications.

Progress on and commitment to a sustainability plan will be required with year two and year three reports.

## Project Evaluation Plan

A project evaluation plan is required. Both qualitative and quantitative data should prove impact in terms of both progress and sustained change for the targeted population(s). The Foundation values quantitative data as a component of that evaluation plan, but also looks forward to hearing

the stories of students, families, educators or others across the community whose lives have been impacted through this shared work.

**Disclaimer**

The Ellbogen Foundation will only review complete applications that adhere to the guidance in this document. The Foundation retains the right to review complete applications and deny grants where the Ellbogen Foundation, at its sole discretion, deems the project may not meet its stated outcomes.



## Grant Proposal Cover Sheet

Date:

Legal Name of Organization:

DBA (if applicable):

Mailing Address (and Physical Address if it is different and not confidential):

Phone:

EIN:

Website:

Name of CEO or Executive Director:

Phone:

Email:

Application Contact & Title (if *not* the CEO or Executive Director):

Phone:

Email:

Mission Statement:

Summary of Grant Purpose:

Amount of Request:

\$

Total Project Costs:

\$

## Grant Proposal Content

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Summary: (Please keep the summary to 200 words or less.)

Total Amount Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Justification of Need**

Please provide data and other information to establish a compelling statement of need(s) in an identified service [geographic] area for the target population. Be concise and clear about why this work is important to students in your area. Identify any significant strengths that will be leveraged or built upon during implementation.

### **Target Population**

Identify who will benefit from this project directly. What change(s) do you expect to see for that population during the next three years? The Foundation Board is particularly interested in changes in knowledge, skills, mindsets, behaviors and/or circumstances.

### **Partners**

Please list the allies (individuals/organizations) who will be involved in this grant work. Briefly explain what they will do and why they are important to the project. Grant applicants should give consideration to community organizations and members who can strategically support impactful grant work. Allies may include, but are not limited to: school district administration, teachers and support staff, school board members, families, Community College and/or University personnel when possible, students, early childhood caregivers and educators, youth serving organizations and afterschool professionals, physical and mental health professionals, and community and business members. Share the problem-solving process that will be used by the coalition to address unanticipated events, challenges or results.

### **Project Design**

The Foundation requires evidence of a comprehensive and systemic action plan that captures three years of anticipated grant activities. The details of the project design should give the Board confidence that ambitious grant outcomes align to and will be delivered from a thoughtful, collaborative plan of action. Therefore, the project design needs to include:

- Clear and significant implementation goals that are responsive to the needs of and data from target populations; goals should align with Graduate Grant actions on page 7,
- Key strategies and actions for implementation that link to outcomes, needs and data, and give consideration to evidence (see pages 5-6)
- Allies who will participate in and be accountable for strategies and actions implementation,
- Approximate timeline (month/year),
- Plans for professional development and learning for adults across the community who influence outcomes for children and youth (What professional learning content and supports will be necessary for adults across the community to meet the needs of students at all ages and in all grades to support student success?),

- Plans for community-wide communication – especially communication and partnership with families; communication should be bi-directional and may include both gathering and sharing information,
- Evidence of success (How will you know that you are making progress (benchmarks))? How will you know if you are successful (outcome measures)?),
- Evaluation process (What approaches, tools, instruments and/or methods will you use to know if you are successful?).

*A fillable template for the project design is available on the Foundation's website. Applicants may submit the project design in their own template so long as it clearly presents the requested information.*

### **Project Evaluation**

Detail your project evaluation as identified in the project design, including how information will be collected, reported and used. We want to know what your success will look like: who will be impacted by when. Project evaluation should include feedback from families and students.

### **Budget and Budget Narrative**

Develop a budget document to illustrate what the project will cost in total (years 1-3) as well as an annual budget for each one of the three grant years. Provide details by including all expenditure categories appropriate to the grant proposal.

Funds may be used for expected and reasonable start-up and operational costs for personnel, including salary and benefits, professional development, materials/supplies, and fees for contracted professional services that directly support the implementation of identified strategies. The grant is to be invested in direct services to students. Please ensure that 95% of the total grant amount is invested into direct services and supports for students. Grant funds must supplement, not supplant existing infrastructures and expenditures to meet the outcomes of the proposal.

*A fillable template for the budget is available on the Foundation's website.*

A budget narrative in the grant proposal should include:

- If necessary, how amounts in budget categories were calculated. Explanations and calculations should explain to the grant review team what the expenditures are for and how amounts shown were determined.
- Documentation of the required cash and in-kind contributions and the source for each. Allowable in-kind contributions include: time from coalition allies or other volunteers, salaries + benefits of personnel providing direct support for implementation, consultant costs for those providing direct support for implementation, technology supports, physical space, and event/meeting courtesy items. Additional in-kind contributions may be considered, but will require approval from the grant review team.
- Identification of who will be accountable for the fiscal management over the three years of grant funding.

### **Statewide Cohort Representation**

Identify one person who will serve as a liaison to the statewide cohort of Graduate grantees to participate in occasional meetings to share community activities and impacts, and learn from what other grantees are doing across Wyoming.

**Additional resources are available as separate documents on the Foundation's website:**

- **A template for the project design,**
- **A worksheet template for the budget,**
- **The evaluation criteria and rubric, and the scoring directions that accompany them.**



## **Grant Proposal Checklist**

Only complete proposals will be shared with the review committee for evaluation. Please ensure that your proposal includes all components before submission.

- Cover Sheet
- Justification of Need narrative
- Target Population narrative
- Partners narrative
- Project Design
- Project Evaluation narrative
- Budget Worksheet
- Budget narrative
- Statewide Cohort Representation narrative

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