

Planning and Design Support for Response, Innovation, and Student Equity (RISE) Education Fund

The COVID-19 crisis has had an enormous impact operationally, educationally, and economically on Colorado’s education landscape. These impacts have hastened the urgency of districts, schools, institutions of higher education, and tribal governments to innovate to better meet the needs of students, particularly those students most historically underserved. Colorado will accept applications for the RISE Education Fund (RISE) totaling \$32 million to support eligible organizations to adapt and reinvent their programs to:

- Launch new student-focused models of learning, which may include whole school turnaround efforts, schools within a school, or efforts to reimagine higher education;
- Dramatically rethink the student experience in higher education to improve persistence, retention, and graduation rates, including 3-year graduation rates and dual and concurrent enrollment;
- Strengthen and formalize linkages between K-12, higher education, and industry, which may include work-based learning, improving transitions, apprenticeships, and preparing students for in-demand careers and sectors in their communities; and/or
- Catalyze innovation that drives long-term impact after the life of the grant, that includes collaboration, leveraged economies of scale through partnerships, and cost savings for institutions, school districts, and students.

To ensure the RISE fund reaches a diversity of geographies across the state, the Gates Family Foundation (GFF) is partnering with the Colorado Governor’s Office and Gary Community Investments (GCI) to provide resources and design support and assistance to those interested in applying for the second grant deadline of December 19, 2020. Planning and Design Support is intended to help applicants improve and strengthen their RISE initiatives through targeted design support. Covering the costs associated with this design support will be the focus of the fund’s resources. Please email mseawell@gatesfamilyfoundation.org with any questions about the Planning and Design Support fund, or see this list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Supports may include:

- Small planning grants to cover staffing costs for applicants, which may include the cost of a grant writer
- Vetted Design Support Partners (DSPs) to help interested applicants develop impactful proposals with strong implementation plans which meet the RISE scoring criteria
- Feedback on applications before they are submitted to the RISE selection committee

Details:

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| Opportunity | Funding, project planning, and design support for efforts that radically rethink and reinvent systems to fundamentally change the experience of school, improve student learning, and/or enhance operational efficiency and equity. |
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| Eligible applicants | School districts, institutions of higher education, charter schools and charter school networks, and tribal governments, or consortia of such applicants which are seeking to apply for Round Two. |
| Design Support Partners | <p>Design Support Partner (DSP) will assist applicants to strengthen their proposals to ensure they address the RISE Selection Criteria outlined below.</p> <p>DSPs will primarily help with two areas: 1) initiative design and facilitation; and 2) proposal development support.</p> <p>The Gates Family Foundation (GFF) and Gary Community Investments (GCI), in partnership with the Governor’s Office for the State of Colorado, will help match applicants with vetted DSPs and cover the costs of their support.</p> <p>If applicants are already working with an existing partner and are seeking resources to help develop an application for RISE, they must include additional information in this application to ensure they meet the qualifications and scope (please see below).</p> |
| Focus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reshape learning and the systems and structures that undergird education institutions, especially for schools in turnaround or institutions facing significant challenges ● Establish or formalize cross-sector, multi-district, or multi-institutional partnerships and collaborations to meet students needs collectively, align programming with local workforce needs, and maximize efficiencies and strengths ● Dramatically rethinking the student experience to create better enabling conditions for student success |

Planning and Design Support Applications

Applicants are asked to provide a 2-4 page narrative that addresses the following:

- Describe the project idea the institution (and possible partners) plans to implement and identify the leaders whose engagement will be critical to move the work forward.
 - Please name one focus area the project seeks to address:
 - Student-focused learning
 - Rethinking the student experience
 - Strengthening and formalizing linkages
 - Catalyzing innovations that can drive long-term impacts
- Describe how COVID-19 related disruptions have catalyzed the effort and increased the urgency for the project proposed.
- Describe the ways the project will support the needs of students whom the existing system has struggled to serve (e.g. minority students, low-income students, English learners, students with disabilities, students experiencing housing insecurity, and system-involved students).
- Describe your planning and design process and how it results in a project that addresses the RISE Selection Criteria in the table below. Please describe your planning process:

- Who are the partners and essential stakeholders (could include parents, students, and educators)?
- What is the intended impact?
- How will the process be facilitated?
- What are some identified sources for potential funds to leverage the RISE investment (district, municipal, in-kind, private, etc)?
- Describe how you will use a Design Support Partner to support your design process and application development.
 - For all applicants:
 - What areas of your proposal do you need support to further develop? Please reference the selection criteria below, if appropriate.
 - What particular areas of expertise in a Design Support Partner would most help you to strengthen your proposal? Check up to three areas.
 - Facilitation
 - Community engagement
 - Application writing
 - Systems design
 - Design thinking
 - Strategic planning
 - Diversity, equity, and inclusion
 - K-12 education finance
 - K-12 education policy
 - Higher education finance
 - Higher education policy
 - Rural issues
 - Other: _____
 - For applicants applying with a pre-identified Design Support Partner(s), please ensure the Design Support Partner(s) completes the [Design Support Partner Survey](#). Then include responses to the following questions:
 - What role will they play in the planning process?
 - How will they help ensure your final proposal best addresses the RISE Selection Criteria?

Please submit applications for Planning and Design support to info@gatesfamilyfoundation.org with “Design Support Application” in the subject line by September 30, 2020 by 5pm for review.

Selection Criteria

Planning and Design Support is a separate and independent process from RISE. Applicants to this fund are encouraged to share what areas in their proposals need strengthening so that support will be best aligned to their needs. The planning process should result in RISE applications that score high on the criteria linked [here](#).

| Dimension | Criteria |
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| Need | Does the effort target students who have been disproportionately impacted and adversely affected by COVID-19? |
| | Is the effort located in a high needs geography (in a rural community, an institution most in need of rapid improvement, focused on academic gaps)? |
| | Compared to other school districts/charter schools/IHEs, has this school district/charter school/IHE been significantly impacted by COVID-19? |
| Innovation | Does the solution have the potential to allow for educators/communities/partners/students to do something that they can't currently do on their own? |
| | Is there openness to devise structures that sustain the approach into the future, like agreements, boards, or other features |
| | Does the solution have the potential to be replicable/scalable? |
| Partnership | Are the right leaders/partners/collaborators engaged in the effort? Who is missing? What strengths and capacities are needed to move the effort forward? |
| | Do the leaders/partners/collaborators share a vision and have they committed any tangible resources to support project implementation (could include time/people/money)? |
| | Does the project have a plan to solicit educator, family, community, and essential stakeholder input in project development and implementation? |
| Impact | Does the effort have a shared learning agenda? Are the goals of the effort measurable and have the leaders/partners/collaborators named performance benchmarks and outcomes? |
| | Does planning and design support from a Design Support Partner have the potential to fill gaps and catalyze planned innovations? |
| | Would planning and design support from a Design Support Partner fill a gap in the local funding landscape to advance the effort? |

Process/Timeline

- Planning and Design Support opportunity announced in tandem September 9 alongside RISE RFP and press release on both funds
- Design Support Partners (DSPs) vetted/evaluated for competencies
 - If you are interested in supporting applicants as a Design Partner, please complete [this survey](#).
- Planning and Design Support applications due September 30, 2020 by 5pm.
 - Interested applicants matched with Design Support Partner(s)
 - Small committee reviews applications and determines awards and design support
- Announce design support and planning grants by October 16
 - Design process goes to round 2 RISE application deadline
- Round 1 RISE RFP applications due October 17
- RISE Selection selects Round 1 projects by November 6
- Round 2 applications due December 19. Round 2 includes all planning grant participants as well as others who have independently completed their applications.
- Round 2 projects selected by January 22
- Promising projects that were not selected for RISE funding may be eligible for grants from philanthropic partners interested in advancing the work. More information about additional funding opportunities will be provided in the future.