

INTERMEDIARIES FOR SCALE

OVERVIEW

The foundation’s work in the U.S. focuses on opportunity – equipping and empowering people to live healthy and productive lives. Improving education is a critical part of that work, and the Postsecondary Success strategy is committed to the goals of increasing student success in education after high school and eliminating race and income as predictors of student success.

Initiatives such as [Completion by Design](#) and the [Frontier Set](#) have shown that dramatically improving outcomes for today’s students – especially low-income and first-generation students, students of color, and working adults – takes more than “one off” changes in practice. It requires *institutional transformation* – fundamental change in culture, organizational structure, and business models and operations to address evolving student needs. Transforming institutions intentionally create cohesive and inclusive learning environments by emphasizing leadership, evidence-driven practice, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Pressure is mounting for colleges and universities to transform – demand for an educated workforce is rising, financial pressures are intensifying, and public confidence is wavering. A growing number of institutions are embracing the need to transform, and they seek networking, resources, and guidance for their efforts.

MEET THE INTERMEDIARIES

The foundation has identified 12 organizations – *Intermediaries for Scale* – that will work across diverse partners to serve transforming institutions as connectors, advisors, and strategists:

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| Achieving the Dream | American Association of State Colleges and Universities |
| American Indian Higher Education Consortium | Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities |
| Complete College America | E3 Alliance |
| Excelencia in Education | Growing Inland Achievement |
| John N Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education | MDRC |
| Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities | UNCF |

These organizations – plus [Jobs for the Future](#), a pilot intermediary – have demonstrated commitment and experience in supporting institutions as they reduce college success disparities by race and income; promoting continuous learning and improvement through the use of data; and identifying, implementing, and evaluating significant campus-level changes in policy and practice. Collectively, these groups work with or represent nearly three-quarters of the nation’s public two- and four-year institutions.

HOW THE INTERMEDIARIES WILL WORK

The intermediaries will focus on four priorities:

1. **Increase awareness** of successful and promising transformation strategies among campus leaders and communities.
2. **Inform key campus-level decisions** about change options and strategies and supporting decision-makers.
3. **Support transformation** by providing guidance and resources for adopting, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining changes in policy and practice.
4. **Build connections** across colleges and universities and other supporting organizations to accelerate and streamline learning and sharing of promising practices.

In the initial phase of the work (two years), the intermediaries will build their capability to work with colleges and universities interested in student-centered transformation. This includes:

- Learning and applying tools such as institutional self-assessments and resources developed by the [Postsecondary Data Partnership](#);
- Evaluating current capacity to provide guidance and technical assistance to colleges and universities (staffing/expertise, management, infrastructure) and identifying areas for expansion or improvement; and
- Developing a strategic plan for delivering support services to colleges and universities and working with partner organizations.

The goal is for intermediaries to collectively engage with at least 300 colleges and universities over the next several years in different but complementary ways.

HOW THE INTERMEDIARIES WERE SELECTED

The foundation selected the intermediaries through a rigorous process that yielded initial applications from more than 200 organizations nationwide and was based on six criteria:

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| Alignment | <i>Goals and work focus on increasing student success and eliminating race and income as predictors of student success</i> |
| Institutional Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Breadth (number of institutions served)</i>• <i>Diversity (types of institutions served)</i>• <i>Students served (focusing on low-income students and students of color)</i>• <i>Location (focusing on priority states)</i>• <i>Depth (scope of services offered)</i> |
| Equity | <i>Commitment to diversity/equity/inclusion in organizational staffing, operations, partnerships, and service to institutions</i> |
| Continuous Learning | <i>Capacity to improve strategy and programming through feedback</i> |
| Systems Orientation | <i>Ability to work within complex federal, state, local, and institutional contexts</i> |
| Collaboration | <i>Track record of collaborating with peers on joint initiatives</i> |

LEARN MORE

For additional information about the Intermediaries for Scale:

- Visit our [frequently asked questions](#).
- Contact us at IntermediariesForScaleRFP@gatesfoundation.org.