

Priority Spokane Request for Proposal (RFP)

Priority Spokane is an endeavor to create a vibrant future for Spokane County. It is through collaborative and focused efforts on improvements to economic vitality, education, the environment, health, and community safety that Spokane will be a flourishing community for all who live and work here.

Priority Spokane has identified educational attainment, specifically increasing Spokane Public Schools high school graduation rates, as a community priority. We believe that enhancing middle school students' experience in and outside the classroom will dramatically improve high school graduation rates. *Priority Spokane* is requesting proposals that will address this challenge.

A. Background and Description of Community Need

In 2004, Eastern Washington University's (EWU) Institute for Policy and Economic Analysis commenced the Community Indicators Initiative (CII). This initiative involved the collection of data - or indicators - to assess the state of the Spokane community in terms of economic vitality, education, health, environment and numerous other areas.

In 2005, the community indicator data for Spokane County was made public on the CII Web site (www.communityindicators.ewu.edu). This was funded in part by Inland Northwest Community Foundation (INWCF) and Northwest Area Foundation (NAF), Minneapolis.

A requirement of the INWCF/NAF grant to EWU was for EWU to host a regional community indicators conference. In spring 2007 a successful conference (over 250 attendees) was held in Spokane, which included numerous breakout sessions chaired by diverse experts on such topics as *Government Use of Indicators*, *Benchmarks for Early Learning* and *Using Indicators to Link Health and the Environment*.

After EWU assessed the results of the conference, INWCF was invited to convene community leaders in Spokane County to develop and implement a community process that would ultimately lead to visible, achievable, measurable and sustainable change in the Spokane community.

Utilizing the community indicator data as a reference point, the community leaders launched *Priority Spokane*, a collaborative and coordinated effort to:

- Identify community priorities that show the greatest potential for improving the well being of our community.
- Establish a broad base of agreement within Spokane County regarding priorities that need to be addressed.
- Develop strategies to make measurable improvement in the priority areas.
- Identify the resources and partners to carry out the strategies.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our actions and measure improvement.

The *Priority Spokane* Steering Committee, which leads this effort, is comprised of representatives from the following entities:

- City of Spokane
- City of Spokane Valley
- Community Building Foundation
- Eastern Washington University
- Empire Health Foundation
- Greater Spokane Incorporated
- Inland Northwest Community Foundation
- Spokane County
- Spokane County United Way
- Spokane Regional Health District
- The Lands Council

Identifying community priorities was *Priority Spokane*'s first step. This was a representative process involving authorities in relevant subject areas. Task forces, which included 115 community volunteers, were formed to focus on economic vitality, education, the environment, healthy people and community safety.

In June 2009, a task force assembly, which consisted of individuals who had previously served on task forces, overwhelmingly endorsed Educational Attainment (i.e., increase high school graduation rates) as the top community priority for Spokane.

A recent Washington State Office of Public Instruction (OSPI) report indicated that in 2008 Washington State's four-year high school graduation rate from 2004 - 2008 was 72%. The most alarming 2008 statistic for this region relates to the four-year high school graduation rate at the Spokane Public Schools (Ferris, Havermale, Lewis & Clark, North Central, Rogers and Shadle Park) – collectively 60.3%.

In August 2009, the *Priority Spokane* Steering Committee determined that effective programs experienced by middle school students would lead to dramatically increasing graduation rates within the six Spokane Public Schools high schools.

During the summer of 2009 the Spokane Public Schools Board held a Board retreat during which the Superintendent and the Board members concluded that the middle schools within Spokane Public Schools should be the subject of a significant focus for reform.

On September 9, 2009, Mark Hurtubise, President and CEO, Inland Northwest Community Foundation, met with the Spokane Public Schools Board and Superintendent. During this meeting, he received the unanimous endorsement for a community-wide and collaborative priority to improve the experiences of middle school students within the Spokane Public Schools.

It should be pointed out that numerous community members from diverse professions, including participants in *Priority Spokane*, the Spokane Public Schools Board and Superintendent as well as INWCF's Board are enthusiastically endorsing this RFP.

B. Project Research (RFP)

Contract with a consultant or organization to accomplish the following research project:

1. Identify relevant theories/leverage points regarding the health, social and academic issues related to middle school students.
2. Identify a minimum of five regional, national or international evidence-based models (inside and outside the classroom) measured in one, three and five year increments, which significantly improve high school graduation rates because of social, health and academic improvements related to the middle school student experience.
3. Identify cost to implement successful models: one-three-five years.
4. Identify sources of revenue used to implement successful models.
5. Identify stakeholders (organizations/agencies/individuals) involved in the implementation of successful models.
6. Identify vehicles utilized for measuring success/managing and tracking data.
7. Identify the programs and organizations currently interacting with Spokane Public Schools middle school students within and outside the classroom 12 months a year.
8. Awarded organization will be involved in a community-wide conference during which the above research will be presented.

C. Ultimate Goal

Adoption and implementation of strategies focused on middle school students that contribute appreciably to increasing graduation rates in Spokane Public Schools.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation

1. November 1, 2009 – November 30, 2009: RFP distributed
2. December 31, 2009: proposals due
3. February 28, 2010: research project commences
4. April 30, 2010: first written update on project
5. June 30, 2010: final written report on project
6. July 2010: meet with entire Priority Spokane Steering Committee
7. Early Fall, 2010: public presentation of project results

E. Organization's Capacity to Accomplish Proposal

1. Please describe your organization's strengths and capacity to implement, manage and monitor progress of the proposal.

F. Risks

1. Identify challenges to the success of project.
2. Identify how they might be overcome.

G. Key Personnel

1. Identify individual(s) who will participate in the project research.
2. Identify individual who will be the primary spokesperson for the project research.

H. Budget

All proposals should include a complete budget and a budget narrative that supports your proposal.

1. Maximum \$50,000 is available for the project. This \$50,000 grant is co-funded by Inland Northwest Community Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
2. Request a minimum of 10% in-kind contribution from organization awarded contract.
3. No more than 5% for administrative overhead to organization awarded contract.

I. Length of Proposal

1. No more than five (5) typed pages. Can be single or double spaced.

J. Instructions for Proposal Submission (Due December 31, 2009)

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