



BRIDGE TO COLLEGE: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP MINI-GRANTS

The *Bridge to College* project has been extended through the 2019-20 school year, expanding now into almost 200 high schools across the state in 115 school districts. At the same time, the recent project evaluation report from *The BERC Group* indicated that a number of the Bridge to College students eligible for automatic placement were unable to use their Bridge course grade but instead were required to take a placement test. To respond to those concerns and to serve additional schools and districts now that the courses are approved graduation alternatives for high school students, the core work of the project over the next two years will be to:

1. Improve communication between high schools and colleges so more students go to college directly after high school and access the placement agreement.
2. Identify and share effective instructional approaches to help more students be successful in the courses.
3. Refine and sustain the professional learning model for new and experienced Bridge teachers around the state.

The *Bridge to College* project is offering a limited number of innovative mini-grants to higher education/K-12 education **partnerships** to:

- *implement effective interventions that help more students move directly and successfully into college,*
- *improve the ongoing professional learning of Bridge to College teachers, and*
- *build/improve local school/college partnerships focused on college readiness and specifically Bridge to College courses.*

The selection process will give priority to schools serving high numbers of historically underserved students and/or schools with a relatively low percentage of students going directly to college.

Partnerships selected for Mini-Grant funding will be expected to provide a summary report of activities, lessons learned and program enhancements made as a result of this project. Any products developed as part of this project will have a Creative Commons license and be distributed in an effort to broaden the impact of these grants. Grantees will also work with external project evaluators as requested.

For college-bound students in Washington, the [Smarter Balanced Assessment](#) helps identify whether they are on track to go directly into college-level courses, or whether they might need additional course work to prepare.

As a result of a statewide agreement among Washington's public colleges and universities, high school students who score at college-ready levels 3 or 4 may use the Smarter Balanced score to enroll directly into college-level courses without taking additional placement tests.

Students who do not score at a college-ready level on the assessments have the opportunity to access the automatic placement agreement with a B or better in [Bridge to College](#) courses. These transition courses in math and English allow high school graduates to avoid taking and paying for pre-college courses when they enter college, help improve the alignment between K-12 and entry-level college math and English curricula, and support ongoing college/K-12 district partnerships and faculty/teacher collaboration.

Funded by a generous grant from College Spark Washington, the Bridge to College courses were collaboratively designed and developed by higher education faculty, high school teachers, and curriculum specialists from multiple colleges and school districts, focusing specifically on the state learning standards that reflect career and college readiness expectations.

For 2018-2020, the Bridge to College initiative is focusing on increasing the number of students successfully completing the Bridge to College courses who enroll in college and are able to use the placement agreement to place directly into college-level courses.

PARTNERS FOR MINI-GRANTS

The partnerships can focus on English, math or both, but they **must** include the following partners:

- **A higher education institution honoring the Bridge to College placement agreement.** Identify a faculty lead from the appropriate discipline/s and/or, depending on the focus of the proposed work, at least one relevant Student Services staff member (e.g., K-12 outreach, placement testing, admissions, advising, etc.).
- **One (or more) high schools offering Bridge to College courses (currently and/or for 2019-20).** Identify teacher/s from the appropriate discipline/s who agree to be partners and, depending on the focus of the work, at least one counselor from each high school named in the proposal.
- (Optional) If appropriate, projects **may** include a discipline instructional coordinator from **the district or local Educational Service District** (where applicable).

PROJECT OUTCOMES MAY INCLUDE:

- Increase the number of high school students transitioning directly into college after graduation and using the placement agreement to enroll in college-level English or math courses.
- Strengthen the curricular alignment between Bridge to College courses and entry-level college courses in math and English in order to improve the college readiness of students graduating from high school.
- Improve the opportunities for students to do post-college planning in their senior year as part of their Bridge to College courses.
- Develop and/or improve local college-to-school district partnerships, with a particular emphasis on faculty and teacher collaboration focused on Bridge to College.

SAMPLE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES ELIGIBLE FOR MINI-GRANT FUNDING:

NOTE: These strategies are suggestions meant to spark your thinking, **not** to be a comprehensive or exclusive list of options.

ADVISING/PLACEMENT

- Convene college advisors/placement staff and high school advisors/counselors to focus on Bridge to College (BTC) and transition issues.
 - Incorporate focus on High School and Beyond Plans into BTC courses.
 - Target work with high school counselors on BTC goals and approaches.
 - Collaborate with area school districts to consider how junior/senior year transition courses like BTC connect to colleges' [Guided Pathways](#) efforts.
 - Register students for college in Bridge to College classrooms.
 - Streamline/simplify the college entry process for BTC students.
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STUDENTS

- Support teachers to take students on field trips to college campuses/classrooms.
- Offer some “College 101” material ([here’s an example of College 101](#)) in (or connected to) BTC classes.
- Help students stay focused on transition to college after completing BTC: guidance resources, interventions to address summer “melt”, early-warning system practices, etc.
- Have students already in college share advice and let students know they can succeed.

CURRICULUM

- Expand the use of the junior year BTC English course aimed at helping students be successful in the senior-year BTC course.
- Offer “just-in-time” support for struggling students, in BTC courses or in college composition/college entry-level math courses, with a particular focus on non-cognitive skills, personal goals, “productive persistence” (especially in math), etc.

TEACHER SUPPORT

- Provide increased support for returning teachers to engage with teacher communities of practice (CoPs) and connect with new BTC teachers around specific issues/concerns.
- Create opportunities for high school teachers to visit college classes and meet with college teachers.
- Help BTC teachers serve as mentors to students in prepping for college (applications, college expectations, etc.).
- Create opportunities for BTC teachers to observe other BTC classes (possibly connected to CoP discussions).
- Convene small-scale regional meetings with BTC teachers and college faculty.
- Recommend and help develop improvements in virtual professional learning for BTC teachers.

OUTREACH

- Partner with area high schools with Bridge to College classes to provide support to students for navigating college entry processes (registration, placement, financial aid, etc.).
- Conduct outreach efforts to area schools to encourage students to attend college directly from high school and promote the placement agreement and Bridge to College as a way for more students to be college-ready before leaving high school.
- Offer professional development for school administrators and/or curriculum coordinators to increase the support for Bridge to College among the districts’ instructional leaders.

FUNDING:

Up to \$10,000 depending on size and focus of partnership (available for work to begin in April 2019 through June 2020) NOTE: Due to limited total funding we may request that proposal budgets be reduced to be able to support more projects.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Please complete and submit the application online (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BTC_RFP) by **January 31, 2019.**

PROJECT TIMELINE:

Fall 2018: Release Request for Proposal by mid-November, select recipients by mid-February 2019

Winter 2019: Convene mini-grant participants to clarify and support their work

Spring 2019: Participants begin to implement interventions

Summer 2019: Summer Institute for grant recipients (TBA, tentative)

Fall 2019: Recipients begin full-scale implementation

Winter/Spring 2020: Periodic web-based check-ins with recipients

Summer 2020: Share project results at final convening of grant recipients (tentative)