2025 COMMUNITY COLLABORATION CHALLENGE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

(Last updated November 7, 2024)

Which organizations can apply?

- US-based community-based organizations (CBOs), schools, districts, local government organizations, or non-profit organizations that are interested in serving as a leader in their community to spur cross-sector collaboration and/or to establish a local or state-level partnership for student success. For profit organizations and individuals are not eligible.

Are these stipends available to smaller programs? We live in a small suburb, and sometime lack larger resources/connections.

- The Community Collaboration Challenge for communities of all sizes in all locations in the United States.

My organization has multiple sites that are interested in applying for the stipends. Can more than one apply?

- Great, we encourage you to apply! **An organization may apply for more than one site.**

We have a strong partnership with our school district. Can these funds be used to mobilize our young adult alumni mentees?

- The intention of the funds is to convene various stakeholders to plan for the start, scale and pilot of evidence-based supports.

Are non-profits in the U.S. Virgin Islands or other U.S. territories that work with youth eligible?

- Organizations in all U.S. states and territories are eligible to apply.

Are national non-profits, who have regional/state/local programming eligible to apply?

- National non-profits with regional, state and/or local programs are eligible to apply.

Can one organization submit more than one application?

- Yes, the same organization can submit more than one application as long as the scope, including the primary NPSS-aligned support, is different.

Is there a matching requirement for the funding?

- There are no matching requirements associated with this funding.

Is this a federal grant?

- No, this is not a federal grant, nor is it a grant from a government entity. No federal funding is being used for this program. The Community Collaboration Challenge is a stipend program created by the NPSS Support Hub, based at the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University with generous support from the Leon Lowenstein Foundation. Stipends will be issued by Johns Hopkins University.

What types of grant activities are allowable for local government agencies to collaborate with schools and communities?

- Should a state or local government agency be awarded the stipend, the NPSS Hub team will work with the awardee to ensure that funds flow is in alignment with local rules and regulations.

What does the ideal scope look like?

- The ideal scope is unique to every community and its needs and assets. The goal of the stipend program is to organize a community response that meets the scale and scope of identified student needs. For example, if a local school system identifies 200 students in need of tutors, mentors, success coaches, post-secondary transition coaches, and/or wraparound or integrated student support coordinators, the effort may be to convene and discuss how the community can come together to provide, train, and support the people-power to meet that need. If the community has an existing program they wish to expand, the scope might include the community planning, development, and launch of further expansion of the support(s). If the community has designed a plan to meet the need and wants to pilot the idea, the scope might entail the planning and execution of a pilot, with a way to gather lessons learned to scale more effectively.

Will professional development/training support be provided for non-profits?

- Yes. Grantees will have access to technical assistance from the NPSS Hub in the form of tools, guidance, access to networks, support identifying local high-quality student support providers,

What is the timeline for the 2025 Community Collaboration Challenge?

- The application for the Community Collaboration Challenge is now open now and closes on November 15th. Awards will be announced in mid-December.

Are we going to participate in the challenge before funding being awarded?

- Applications/Requests for Proposals are due on November 15th and awardees will be announced in mid-December. Funding will be disbursed in three payments from January – June 2025 and deliverables must be complete by June 15, 2025.

How do you define high-quality student support providers?

- The NPSS Hub released [voluntary quality standards](#) which are designed for use by schools, districts, state education agencies, youth-serving organizations, foundations, community groups, and others to better understand essential components of quality, set goals as part of existing or emerging continuous improvement processes, set goals when designing new programs, and consider prospective partners. These voluntary quality standards define elements of quality across the five NPSS student support roles – tutoring, mentoring, student success coaching, postsecondary transition coaching, and wraparound/integrated student support coordination. They are essential to any effort to recruit, train, place, and support staff and volunteers in programs that are safe, supportive, and effectively engage students and families and can be useful in your work to identify high-quality student supports in your community. Please note that a community is not required to meet all aspects of the voluntary quality standards in order to be eligible for the Community Collaboration Challenge. The goal of the Community Collaboration Challenge is to catalyze relevant stakeholders in a community to start/plan, expand or pilot of student supports.

What are the definitions used to answer question 2, "Community Type" (urban, suburban, or rural)?

- To answer this question, consider urban to define densely populated areas at the center of a major metropolitan area and with a population of more than 50,000. Suburban communities are situated outside of a principal/metropolitan area and are not geographically isolated, like a rural community may be.

What are the expected deliverables?

- The applicant will define the deliverables in question 8 for which you will "describe 1) the types of stakeholders you will convene, 2) 1-3 goals for the work, and 3) 1-3 proposed activities or deliverables, including how they will be effective in achieving your goals."

Are you looking for a specific type of stakeholder to be included?

- No specific type is required, although a requirement of the application is for a district or school partner point of contact to be named, and this is in a large point because awardees should include educators as stakeholders and utilize this opportunity to create or enhance a school or district partnership.

Is this challenge primarily focused on funding new strategies or does it also fund the expansion of the scope of currently implemented strategies?

- The Challenge is designed to support both new evidence-based strategies within a community and support the expansion or pilot of currently implemented ones.

Is there an age range/limit for students being supported by mentoring programs?

- The NPSS is a national effort to help P-12 students in their communities to recover from the impacts of the pandemic and thrive.

Does the program have to partner with schools/school districts to be eligible?

- It is encouraged the proposed activities are part of a coordinated community effort, with diverse community stakeholders, including schools/school districts. Additionally, an agreement does not already need to be in place but the ability to build these types of relationships will need to be demonstrated in the application.

Can funds be used to pay high school student mentees for their time spent supporting younger peers?

- This would be an allowable expense as long as it was outside the school day, though we would encourage applicants to consider using funds in ways that reviewers can see a path to long-term sustainability. We have seen applications that included incentives/awards along with additional budget items required to pilot or expand (tutoring, mentoring, etc.).

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What limitations are there on the allowable uses for the funding?

- Expenses related to convening stakeholders, piloting or expanding student supports are the allowable uses of this funding.

- Funding can be used to expand an existing program, but it cannot be used simply to fund an existing program. We're looking for catalyzing opportunities so the application should explain how the funding will be used to do that. If it's simply to hire X amount of people to support Y more students, it likely won't score well.

- Funds may not be used for any of the following purposes: to attempt to influence legislation or the outcome of any specific public election; to carry on, directly or indirectly, any voter registration drive; or to undertake any activities for a non-charitable purpose.

- Funds may not be used for purchases of alcohol or first or business class travel.

Can funds be used to pay for for-profit services?

- If an applicant plans to pay a for-profit organization to deliver on the goals of the proposed project or need to spend some of the funds on for-profit supplies/other costs, that is allowable, but it does need to be clearly explained in the application.

Are indirect costs allowable expenses for the funds?

- Yes, indirect costs are allowable expenses but need to be explained in the application and may not exceed 15% of the direct costs.

How will the funding be allocated to the awardees?

- The awardees will be required to become a registered in JHU's vendor system, Payment Works and finalize a scope of work with the NPSS Hub team. Following the assignment of a vendor registration number, JHU will issue the award in three payments, one shortly after the kickoff meeting, another at midpoint and a third following the close out meeting, presuming the deliverables as indicated on the scope of work are progressing and/or complete.