The Institutional Challenge
Grant: Round 7

Webinar March 2023
@wtgrantfdn
Today’s Webinar

PART I
• Brief Background: The Foundation’s Funding Interests
• The Institutional Challenge Grant: Overview of the Program

PART II
• Application and Review Process
• Resources
• Questions?
Our History

- Founded in 1936
- Committed to understanding human behavior through research
- Focus on the most pressing challenges confronting young people
- Support high-quality research relevant to youth ages 5 to 25 in the U.S.
Improving the use of research evidence in ways that benefit youth

Reducing inequality in youth outcomes
Institutional Challenge Grant

**Partnership**
Grow an Existing Institutional Partnership

**Research**
Pursue a joint research agenda to reduce youth inequality

**Institutional Change**
Create institutional change to value research practice partnerships & their work

**Capacity**
Enhance both partners’ capacity to collaborate in producing and using research
Institutional Challenge Grant

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Enhance both partners’ capacity to collaborate in producing and using research
Research-practice partnerships are long-term, mutually beneficial collaborations that promote the production and use of rigorous and relevant research evidence.
Institutional Challenge Grant

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Why Reducing Inequality?

- Inequality by economic, racial, ethnic, and immigrant origins is pervasive
- Evidence often exists on the nature and sources of inequality
- Ways to reduce inequality are less well understood

- Studies on programs, policies, & practices that reduce inequality in youth outcomes
We seek research to build, test, or improve policies, programs, and practices to reduce inequality in academic, behavioral, economic, or social outcomes

We seek research to reduce inequality on the basis of economic standing, race, ethnicity, and immigrant origin status
Examples of Partnership Research

• University of Toronto and the Puerto Rico Department of Education
  ✓ Program evaluation of a principal management training program as a strategy for improving students’ educational experiences and academic performance

• Johns Hopkins University and the Fort Belknap Indian Community
  ✓ Mixed methods research to develop a culturally-responsive intervention for preventing suicide among Indigenous adolescents and young adults

• University of Santa Cruz and the United Way of Santa Cruz County
  ✓ Youth participatory action research with middle and high school Latinx youth from low-income families to identify and address barriers to community’s “hopes and dreams”
Institutional Challenge Grant

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Institutional Change

• Policies and practices within institutions inadvertently create barriers to the success of partnerships
  o limit participation between and within institutions
  o obstruct career advancement
  o undermine longevity
Institutional Change

- Examine and redesign policies and practices to:
  - encourage sustained institutional partnerships with public agencies or nonprofit organizations
  - incentivize experienced researchers to pursue rigorous and relevant research agendas
  - improve the partnership skills of researchers
Examples of Institutional Change

- University centers
- Integrating into strategic plans
- Small or seed grants for community-engaged research
- Hiring
- Research infrastructure support changes

- Revisions to merit, tenure & promotion criteria
- Raising the profile of community-engaged research
- Teaching releases
- Collaborations across university system campuses to expand institutional change
Institutional Challenge Grant

- **Partnership**
  - Grow an Existing Institutional Partnership

- **Research**
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- **Institutional Change**
  - Create institutional change to value research practice partnerships & their work

- **Capacity**
  - Enhance both partners’ capacity to collaborate in producing and using research
Examples of Capacity-Building

• Build skills on partnership and university side
• Strengthen data collection to support solving problems of practice
• Leadership positions
• Co-design research agendas
• Build joint skills to write policy-relevant briefs
Mid-Career Fellows

- The project plan should clearly allow the research fellows to significantly extend their skills as effective partners to policymaker and practitioners.

- The project should include a feasible plan for leveraging the fellows to increase the capacity of the public agency or private nonprofit organization to use research in decision making to improve youth outcomes.
Mid-Career Fellows

• Funding for two years of a full-time equivalent fellowship.
  – In addition, universities are required to fund one additional year of a full-time equivalent fellowship.
• Fellowships may be allocated in different ways. Some examples:
  – Appointing one individual fellow for three years
  – OR three different fellows each for one year
  – OR six half-time fellows for one year each, etc.
• The minimum appointment level for a fellow is half-time for half of one year.
EXAMPLE ALLOCATIONS OF MID-CAREER FELLOWS

The Institutional Challenge Grant provides funding for two years of a full-time equivalent fellowship. In addition, universities are required to fund one additional year of a full-time equivalent fellowship.

The tables on the left provide examples of different ways to allocate mid-career fellows during the grant period.
Questions?
Application Process
Institutional Challenge Grant

- $650K for 3 years
  - ✓ with a possible 2-year renewal
  - Up to a 9-month planning period
  - The partnership’s research to reduce inequality
  - Mid-career fellows (8-20 years since Ph.D. or in role)
  - Capacity-building activities
  - Indirect cost allowance of up to 15% of total direct costs
- In-kind support for one full time equivalent fellow for one year
Review Process

- Applications due September 13th, 2023 (3 pm ET)
  - Full proposal, structured abstract, and all agreements
- Senior staff review the four-page structured abstract
- Selection Committee
  - Two in-depth reviews by two members
  - Selection of finalists
- Finalists
  - Written response & in-person interviews
APPLICATION PROCESSES

Aspirations for grantees

• At the end of five years,

  ✓ Established set of strategies that facilitate sustained research partnerships with public agencies or nonprofits

  ✓ The public agency or nonprofit has increased its capacity to use research evidence

  ✓ Researchers have improved their partnership skills

  ✓ The research generated has been used in decision making and is likely to lead to improved outcomes for youth
Noteworthy

• We encourage proposals from teams with Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and Asian American members in leadership roles

• We welcome multi-disciplinary and mixed method studies.

• Resubmissions welcome!
On our Website

SELECTED RESOURCES

Webinar: Applying for the Institutional Challenge Grant—Proposing Strategies to Foster Institutional Change

Partnering for Community Change: How the Institutional Challenge Grant Has Shaped Our Work

Research-practice partnerships website

The Foundation’s research-practice partnerships website includes guiding tips, work samples, and resources from successful partnerships on topics including using research, communicating research and engaging stakeholders, and developing agendas and agreements.

rpp.wtgrantfdn.org
# Funded Partnerships (2018-2022)

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<tr>
<th>Institution 1</th>
<th>Institution 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cornell University</td>
<td>University of California Santa Cruz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cornell Cooperative Extension-Tompkins County</td>
<td>United Way of Santa Cruz</td>
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<td>University Colorado-Boulder</td>
<td>Northeastern University</td>
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<td>Denver Public Schools</td>
<td>City of Boston</td>
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<td>University of Toronto</td>
<td>Johns Hopkins University</td>
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<td>Puerto Rico Department of Education</td>
<td>Fort Belknap Tribal Community</td>
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<td>Boston College</td>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Way of Merrimack Valley &amp; Massachusetts Bay</td>
<td>Focus: HOPE</td>
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<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>Florida State University</td>
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<td>Evanston Township School District</td>
<td>Leon County Schools</td>
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<td>202 &amp; Evanston/Skokie District 65</td>
<td>Achieve Atlanta</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of California Berkeley</td>
<td>San Francisco Unified School District</td>
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