



Barr Foundation

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - MEETING THE MOMENT: TRANSFORMING THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE RFP

Updated 3/3/23

Eligibility

Would a proposal where a nonprofit organization or institution of higher education applies (in collaboration/partnership with a high school) align with this funding opportunity?

For this particular RFP, the lead applicant must be the school/LEA. This requirement is due to the focus on school- and system-level leadership for the community of practice and their key role in leading the work this grant opportunity will fund. The school/system is welcome to partner with other organizations on aspects of their “learn, dream, plan” work. Grant funds can be budgeted for external consultants and technical assistance of different types, including organizations with whom applicants already work or have worked. Successful applicants will clearly describe how this opportunity would support work with the technical assistance partner that would not be occurring otherwise and that is clearly aligned with the project.

Is a school/system that has already started work on a strategic plan, portrait of a graduate, or a similar visioning process still eligible to apply?

Yes, schools/systems that may have already been doing some planning and design work are eligible to apply if they are interested in stepping back to engage in the deep planning and anchoring process that is enabled by this opportunity and if they are open to potentially changing their plans based on what they learn during the course of the year. If some work has already begun, successful proposals will explain how applicants expect this particular opportunity would shape the work differently and impact it more deeply than would have been possible otherwise. All selected applicants are expected to engage fully in the Learn, Dream, and Plan phases of the grant opportunity regardless of their starting place. As this is a planning-focused grant, it would not be the right opportunity for a community that is looking for implementation support for an existing plan or specific solution to roll out.

What are the criteria for a group application?

A group or regional consortium/collaborative of LEAs or schools organized around common goals or interests may apply for this RFP. A successful group application should have a clearly shared goal and rationale for why a

collaborative approach would be beneficial. As one illustrative example, Barr funds a regional collaboration of high schools across a county. The schools developed a common Portrait of a Graduate together and are now working on a shared priority to increase classroom rigor and are doing joint professional development and inter-school visits as part of that work.

Are single regional vocational schools eligible to apply?

Generally speaking, single school LEAs will not be eligible to apply for this particular RFP because of the dual focus on the school and the school system levels. Additionally, if a vocational school has a screened admissions policy, they would also not be eligible to apply. However, we are happy to discuss specific any eligibility questions by email or in an office hours call.

Is this RFP applicable to a school that includes more than just high school grade levels 9-12 (for example, a K-12 or 7-12 school)?

Yes, as long as the high school population included in the proposal (across 1 or more high schools) includes a minimum of 100 students and meets the other eligibility criteria, schools that include grade levels in addition to 9-12 are eligible to apply.

Are current Barr grantees eligible to apply?

If you are a current Barr grantee, please reach out to your Program Officer to discuss your eligibility for this opportunity.

Key Grant Activities

What is the estimated time commitment for working team members?

The working team members will be key champions for the project, including participating in all learning community events and leading stakeholder engagement in the school and system. Based on what we've seen as necessary commitments from other work, we are expecting that working team members should plan to dedicate at least 20 hours per month to organizing and leading this work throughout the grant period, with 12 days dedicated specifically to engagement in the learning community. Working Team members should also expect to dedicate at least 8 to 10 hours per month to regular planning and meetings. These are not required minimum hours, nor are they maximum hours. The main purpose is to ensure that your team has set aside the time, flexibility, and budget resources needed to fully engage in this important work throughout the grant period.

Who should we include on our working team?

The ideal central office participant(s) for the community of practice should be at the Superintendent level or have direct influence with the Superintendent, depending on the size of the system. The ideal high school participant(s) should be the principal or have direct influence over instructional policy with the principal.

If our school/district already has a School Quality Review or NEASC visit coming up, can we opt out of the Springpoint School Observation Visit during the “Learn” phase this fall?

The Springpoint School Observation Visit process is a key component of the “Learn” phase and all cohort learning community member high schools will be expected to host a visit this fall. The School Observation Visit complements other types of visits like School Quality Reviews or NEASC, but differs in a few key ways. First, the visit is grounded in the [Indicators of School Quality](#), a high school specific framework that takes a comprehensive approach to looking at high school quality and covers the mindsets, policy, and practices that must all be addressed in integrated ways. Second, the visit is highly developmental and interactive; it is customized to be maximally helpful to the school community and lifts up areas of strength along with a prioritized set of 2-3 recommendations. School Observation Visits are a highly acclaimed benefit of Barr partnership among current Barr partners and we have heard from many school leaders that the visit process and feedback are among the most important professional experiences they have had. We encourage you to reach out with additional questions about the visit.

Where is the inspirational site visit in the “Dream” phase going to be?

We are working with our technical assistance partner to determine which schools to visit, and will base the decision partly on the needs, interests, and learning questions of the schools and systems who are selected for this cohort. In the past, similar types of visits have tended to be approximately three days to allow for multiple school visits plus time for teams to debrief and process. It is possible that the visit could involve plane travel within the United States. We anticipate having more information for learning community members by late summer/early fall.

Could you provide more information on the Barr-supported survey option? We are not sure if the survey(s) we administer meet the requirements.

For the Barr-supported survey option, we are planning to partner with [YouthTruth](#), a national nonprofit with deep data expertise and years of experience conducting surveys and supporting schools with data analysis. We’ve worked with YouthTruth in the past and received great feedback from our partner schools who participated in their surveys. This page gives an [overview](#) of the YouthTruth survey instruments and data reports and includes links to sample reports. The survey questions are available [here](#).

Budget/Use of Grant Funds

What travel/visit expenses are covered by Barr, and what is not covered that we should include in our budget?

Costs associated with travel and participation in all in-person learning community convenings and the multi-day school visit will be covered by the Barr Foundation directly and should not be included in a grant budget request. Costs associated with any additional site visits the applicant team wishes to pursue beyond those supported by Barr as part of this grant can be included in the grant budget request.

Can you recommend external consultants or organizations for communities to work with?

We do not endorse specific consultants or organizations for communities to work with. We strongly encourage robust exploration and vetting of potential partners. Additionally, other grantees in the learning community might be a helpful source of information about potential consultants or organizations. The budget template and narrative can include placeholder funds for this work if the school/system would like to explore potential consultants or organizations after the grant period has begun.

Is there guidance regarding the appropriate amount of support to request in the budget request?

In developing your budget request, we encourage you to think about your specific community that will be involved in this process, and what resources you will need in order to facilitate a robust process with them across all the grant activities. This amount will likely be different depending on factors like your geographic range, if you're a single high school or working with multiple schools, and the size of your school/system, for example.

Funding Decisions

What is the process and timeline for funding decisions?

Grant proposals are due by March 15 at 5 p.m. Following proposal submissions, we will conduct an internal review process in which every proposal is read by multiple reviewers. In late March, we may contact certain applicants as follow-up. Please note that contact from Barr at this phase of the proposal review process does not constitute notification or guarantee of an award. Award notification will occur in June, and the grant period will be July 2023 – July 2024.

Is there a priority geographic location for funding?

We will not give priority by location, nor do we aim to make a specific geographic distribution of grants. All communities that are located in New England (Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, or Vermont) and meet the other eligibility criteria are welcome to apply.

Will preference be given to applicants based on the number of students served?

No, there will not be preference given based only on the number of students served. To optimize the impact of this opportunity, applicants must serve at least 100 students at the high school level across the participating schools.

Does the Barr Foundation Education program advocate for a particular high school model?

There is no "Barr model" of high school. We believe that excellent high schools come in many different forms and that components of high-quality schools can be actualized in a variety of ways.

Support and Resources

Do you anticipate offering this Meeting the Moment RFP again the following school year?

It is unlikely that will offer this same RFP opportunity again the following school year. We are always iterating on our offerings based on what we learn from our work and our grantee partners, and in the past we have not offered the same RFP opportunity twice.

Are there similar opportunities available for communities that are not eligible for this RFP?

We do not currently have similar RFP opportunities available, but we also do grantmaking by individual invitation on a monthly basis. We always welcome inquiries from those who feel their work may align with Barr's Education strategies. The best approach is to email education@barrfoundation.org with a brief description (we suggest 300–400 words) of your organization and the funding opportunity you would like us to consider. Given the high volume of inquiries we receive and a relatively small staff, it may take a few weeks to hear back from our Education team.

Who can I contact if I have a question that wasn't answered here?

Please email us at EducationRFP@barrfoundation.org with any questions or to register for office hours. You can also review the March 1 webinar recording on the RFP landing page [here](#).