



**RICHARD
KING MELLON**
F O U N D A T I O N

Addressing Learning Loss for Pre-K through Grade 12 Students

Request for Proposals

Round 1: Applications due April 17, 2023, 12:00 PM EST

Round 2: Applications due September 13, 2023, 12:00 PM EST

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Richard King Mellon Foundation	3
Economic Mobility Funding Program	3
Background	3
Request for Proposals	4
Examples	5
Funding Guidelines: Nonprofit or Public Sector Organizations	7
Funding Range	7
Types of Support	7
Collaborations	8
Funding Guidelines: Entrepreneurs and For-profit Companies with a Social Mission	8
Funding Range	8
Types of Support	8
What the Foundation Will Not Fund	9
Application Timeline	9
Inquiries	9

Introduction to the Richard King Mellon Foundation

Since 1947, the [Richard King Mellon Foundation](#) (Foundation) has funded visionaries with bold ideas to advance prosperity in Southwestern Pennsylvania and environmental conservation across the United States. The Foundation's 2020 year-end endowment was \$3.1 billion, and its Trustees in 2020 disbursed \$130 million in grants and program-related investments.

The Foundation has six funding programs: Conservation; Economic Development; Economic Mobility; Health & Well-Being; Organizational Effectiveness; and Social-Impact Investments. All six programs invest in transformative, evidence-informed solutions that align with the Foundation's mission and contribute to positive change.

Economic Mobility Funding Program

The [Economic Mobility funding program](#) serves children and young adults from birth to age 24 who reside in low-income households in Allegheny or Westmoreland counties. The program addresses the problem that in Allegheny and Westmoreland counties, children in lower-income households have less access to opportunities that contribute to economic mobility in adulthood. Also, community-level factors create obstacles that impede some children's pathway to economic mobility.

The Foundation organizes its Economic Mobility program into four investment areas: Educational Attainment; Future of Work; Supportive Living Environments; and Places of Opportunity. Collectively, these four investment areas describe the Foundation's approach to addressing the problem of limited economic mobility for children who reside in low-income households.

Background

In October 2022, economists from [Harvard University's Center for Education Policy Research](#) found that recent learning losses in K-12 students' math attainment "would represent a 1.6 percent decline in present value of lifetime earnings for the average K-12 student (or \$19,400), totaling \$900 billion for the 48 million students enrolled in public schools during the 2020-21 school year" if these learning losses remained permanent.

A comparison of 2016-2019 and 2022 [PSSA](#) and [Keystone Assessment](#) data from the PA Department of Education suggests that students in Allegheny and Westmoreland counties, who may not be represented in NAEP data, have also experienced learning losses in the areas of math and English and Language Arts. Students categorized in the "Historically Underperforming" subgroup by the Pennsylvania Department of Education – a non-duplicated population of students

with disabilities, students who are economically disadvantaged, or English Language Learners – scored lower than the “All Students” population on the PA exams in 2022. Additional data from the PA Department of Education’s [Future Ready Index](#) suggests that students of color disproportionately experienced learning loss compared to their peers. Based on local data, it is feasible to believe that local students may – like their national peers - experience a decline in lifetime earnings if urgent action is not taken.

Request for Proposals

The Richard King Mellon Foundation is issuing a Request for Proposals that aims to reduce or eliminate disparities in math, reading, and science literacy¹ among young people ages zero to 24 years who reside in low-income households in Allegheny and Westmoreland counties. Proposals submitted for this Request for Proposals fit within the [Economic Mobility program’s Educational Attainment investment area](#).

The Foundation will consider all submitted proposals that urgently seek to increase student success in math, reading, and science literacy by providing learning opportunities in in-school, afterschool, or other wraparound learning settings that accelerate and deepen students’ mastery.

Submitted proposals must clearly describe:

- How learners from low-income households in Allegheny and Westmoreland counties in PA will be engaged in and benefit from the proposal
- The use of high quality and evidence-informed learning resources, instructional practices, and learner activities
- Professional development and instructor supports that contribute to increased learner success
- Feasible, measurable outcomes, including target metrics that describe the degree of change in behaviors, knowledge, and skills that are expected to result from the proposed activities
- How the proposed outcomes align with the outcomes embedded in the Foundation’s [Economic Mobility funding program](#)

¹ Science literacy “enables people to use scientific principles and processes in making personal decisions and to participate in discussions of scientific issues that affect society.” Science literacy includes understanding the subject matter; using the scientific process to ask, find, or determine answers to questions; and assess the quality of scientific information. *National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*. 1996. *National Science Education Standards*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/4962>.

- Evaluation methods that use a variety of data; empower learners to co-create success with educators; and deploy best practices in learning and implementation science

The Foundation also strongly encourages collaborative proposals that engage multiple partners in the proposed activities, including sharing missions and goals, co-creating and sharing programs and services, and partnering in systems change.

Examples

Examples of ideas that may be considered include, but are not limited to, the items noted in Table 1 on the following page. These are solely illustrative and not proscriptive. Applications may include a variety of services, products, or technologies. The Foundation welcomes a range of ideas and encourages thoughtful experimentation.

Table 1

Funding Purpose	Sample Ideas
Planning and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with local education stakeholders, develop a feasibility assessment and implementation recommendations for the delivery of systematic, high-quality and high-dosage tutoring interventions at scale • Conduct stakeholder engagement and planning to identify opportunities for changes in school systems and schedules that accelerate student learning • Conduct applied research, including developing prototypes of educational technologies, that advance the science of learning and make it accessible to educators in school and out-of-school settings
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide early literacy resources and training for caregivers and early childhood educators to expand access to high quality literacy instruction • Deliver programming that increases students' learning using resources that are: aligned to state standards, incorporate evidence-based instructional activities, and relevant and engaging to the student population that would be served
Scalability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the use of promising interventions, including technologies, to increase hundreds or thousands of students' math proficiency • Create and deploy communications assets or other toolkits that help parents and caregivers to navigate the landscape of learning supports that are available in and out of school • Provide technical assistance to educational entities in the Foundation's focal counties to expand implementation of evidence-based practices

Funding Guidelines: Nonprofit or Public Sector Organizations

The Foundation's general eligibility criteria apply to the RFP. Please review our [application FAQ](#). Additional [detailed instructions for how nonprofits and public sector organizations should complete the application can be found in this PDF](#).

Funding Range

For all types of grants awarded to nonprofit and public sector organizations through the RFP, the Foundation expects to fund projects in the range of \$150,000-\$500,000, depending on the complexity of the proposed project, the number of collaborators, and the type of support (Planning and Innovation, Implementation, or Scalability).

If an application is truly exceptional, the Foundation may consider providing more funding than this range. Successful grants may be invited to apply for follow-on funding or additional capacity-building funding opportunities at the conclusion of the grant.

Types of Support

The Foundation expects to provide three types of support for nonprofit or public sector organizations through this RFP. The funded activities must be conducted within 6-24 months.

- **Planning and Innovation grants** focus on experimentation and the development of new ideas. Recipients might describe activities such as piloting services or completing a feasibility study. Any evaluation activities should focus on understanding successes, challenges, and future possibilities resulting from the initial project.
- **Implementation grants** are for more developed concepts and services that are currently being conducted and need further infusion of funds to support reaching populations more deeply or with further intentionality. Recipients of this funding often have demonstrated past successes and have capacity to engage in iteration and evaluation.
- **Scalability grants** are focused on projects and ideas that have been tested within one population group or in one geographic area with promising success; they need an infusion of funds to expand the reach of the program to other population groups or geographic areas. This funding supports extending the reach of a promising model or project.

Grant funds awarded through this RFP may be used for a variety of expenses such as program and service delivery, consultant fees, evaluation, or "overhead" or administrative expenses.

Collaborations

For the purposes of this RFP, the Foundation offers additional guidance about collaborative proposals from public sector and nonprofit organizations.

Public sector organizations:

- may serve as the lead agency submitting a proposal
- may participate as collaborating partners on proposals submitted by nonprofit organizations
- include entities such as school districts, courts, or departments of health or human services

Nonprofit organizations:

- may serve as the lead agency for all types of grants
- may participate as collaborating partners for all types of grants

Funding Guidelines: Entrepreneurs and For-profit Companies with a Social Mission

The Foundation's general eligibility criteria apply to the RFP. Please review our [application FAQ](#). Additional [detailed instructions for how for-profit companies should complete the application](#) can be found in this PDF.

Funding Range

The Foundation expects to invest in the range of \$250,000-\$500,000 as a convertible instrument or Safe. Please visit the Foundation's [Social-Impact Investments program](#) to learn more about funding opportunities for for-profit companies.

Types of Support

The Foundation expects to provide support for entrepreneurs and for-profit companies with a social mission at either of the following stages through this RFP.

- **Implementation-focused program-related investments** are for entrepreneurs or businesses that have developed at least a minimum viable product but are still seeking product-market fit and need further infusion of funds to support reaching populations more deeply or with further intentionality.
- **Scalability-focused program-related investments** are for entrepreneurs or businesses with well-developed products or services and have established relationships with their customers and end-users; they need an infusion of funds to expand to additional customer segments or geographic areas.

What the Foundation Will Not Fund

The Foundation will not fund the following items through this RFP:

- Endowments
- Advocacy, political causes or events
- Existing deficits or retroactive funding
- Event sponsorships
- Student scholarships

Application Timeline

Funding is expected to be awarded in two rounds during 2023.

- Applications submitted in Round 1 may be presented to the Foundation's Board of Trustees for funding consideration in June 2023.
- Applications submitted in Round 2 may be submitted the Foundation's Board of Trustees for funding consideration in December 2023.

Round 1	
Monday, April 17, 2023. Noon (12:00 PM) EST.	Applications submitted https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_5499?SA=SNA&FID=35067
Friday, June 30, 2023	Funding Status Notification
Friday, July 14, 2023	Funds Issued for Awarded Grants
Round 2	
Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2023 Noon (12:00 PM) EST.	Applications submitted https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_5499?SA=SNA&FID=35067
Friday, December 22, 2023	Funding Status Notification
Friday, December 22, 2023	Funds Issued for Awarded Grants

Inquiries

Please contact Lynne Ventress (lventress@rkmf.org) at the Foundation to discuss questions regarding this RFP. However, a discussion is discretionary and not a requirement.