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Ecosystem Fund talent initiatives

A theory of change to support our request for proposals

Our landscape

Most of the 30,000 students in Minneapolis who experience poverty don't have access to a rigorous and relevant education or to teachers who reflect their diversity. To reach our goal of closing this opportunity gap, district, charter and independent schools across Minneapolis need the talents of more teachers of color and American Indian teachers, as well as an educator workforce with the preparation, beliefs and commitment to provide all children – especially those who experience poverty – with an excellent education.

Working together toward solutions

Schools are made great for students and parents through great leadership and great teaching. Minneapolis schools in every sector struggle with core challenges to foster and sustain strong school teams. The Talent Team at MN Comeback – comprised of stakeholders with deep experience in and passion for supporting strong school teams – developed a 'theory of change' for our grants program through conversations with school leaders and insights from community partners, with an eye toward how we can best focus funding and leverage collaboration.

Our goal: By 2025, our community is supporting high-performing, high-potential schools in the retention and development of 2,000 educators across the continuum of the teaching profession from recruitment, training, hiring, and onboarding to leadership development with 50 percent of new hires identifying as people of color.

The purpose of the talent initiatives (from MN Comeback's Ecosystem Fund) is to seed and connect innovative strategies that further inspire and support school leaders and teacher teams across all three school sectors toward this goal.

Talent initiatives

Numerous programs are aimed at supporting schools in resolving challenges of hiring, supporting, developing and maintaining a well prepared, diverse, educator workforce. MN Comeback is focused on creating a strategic framework for advancing solutions to the challenges of increasing the number of strongly prepared individuals entering the education profession and fostering the talents of those already in the field. We believe that the synergy created through aligning resources and relationships with high-performing and high-potential schools will increase the momentum for systemic improvement and will further develop and advance equity in the education profession.

The talent team values:

- Advancing equity in the education profession;
- Collaborative systems-changing strategies instead of one-off solutions;
- Opportunities that are relevant and specific to the needs of our teacher, school leader, and student population;
- Shared learning and communities of practice among high-performing/high-potential schools; and
- Specific measurable outcomes that can be replicated and that can serve multiple school sectors



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Outcomes focus:

1. Increased instructional rigor and relevant socio-emotional support in classrooms
2. Continuous professional growth and increased retention of effective teachers and school leadership teams
3. Hiring and development of strongly prepared teachers in licensure shortage areas such as special education, math, science, ESL and Spanish
4. Dramatically increased numbers of people of color and native peoples who are teachers and school leadership team members

Priority areas for strategy proposals:

- Using data to drive instruction that is focused on rigorous academic growth.
- Supporting school leaders and teachers to further their effectiveness in providing a relevant education for students they serve (e.g. implementation of efforts to ensure students are building strong social/emotional skills) and/or cultivating a culture and climate that supports learning (for example, supporting educators in better serving students affected by trauma).
- Supporting principals in their development of teachers as instructional masters and emerging leaders.
- Expansion, revision, or creation of teacher licensure programs (including alternative certification or non-conventional pathways) that strongly prepare teachers with the belief and ability to ensure students experiencing poverty achieve at high levels. With a specific focus on:
 - Non-traditional students, people of color, and native people to enter the teaching profession;
 - Specific licensure shortage areas for example special education, science, math, ESL, and Spanish.

Eligibility

Work must prioritize K-12 education in Minneapolis high-performing and high-potential schools that serve predominantly students from low-income backgrounds. High-performing schools are changing the odds for students living in poverty as evidenced by proficiency rates or growth rates that outperform the state average. High-potential schools have demonstrated some success toward closing the achievement gap and have meaningful strategies and leadership in place to accelerate their performance. Implementation must begin in SY1617 or fall 2017.

2017 winter cycle award

We anticipate awarding at least \$500,000 this grant cycle with bands of funding ranging from \$25,000 - \$100,000. Proposals with strategies that involve collaboration across organizations to address multiple priority areas could receive larger awards in the \$100,000 - \$250,000 range. The average amount per grant will vary depending on scope of the proposal, and we encourage applicants to ask for the funds needed for your goal to be met. In spring 2017 we will launch our School Micro Grants program. More information coming soon!

Our process

The Talent Team identifies the objectives and strategies and makes funding recommendations to MN Comeback staff. The Talent Team will have a group of educator reviewers – teachers and school leaders, across school sectors – who will vet all proposals. MN Comeback staff and Board will make final decisions.

About MN Comeback

MN Comeback leads a coalition of schools, community leaders and funders coordinating around K-12 systems change. It's initially focused on the 30,000 Minneapolis students who experience poverty so, they, too, have access to rigorous and relevant schools. Its coalition – applying a school-centered approach – focuses on the conditions that foster schools' success: increasing the number of



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extraordinary leaders and teachers working in our community, fostering deep community and parent engagement, advocating for supportive public policy, and helping schools access quality facilities. MN Comeback is a nonprofit organization based in Minneapolis. For more information, visit www.mncomeback.org.

Grant-making Calendar

Timeline	Description
Nov. 18, 2016	Launch of MN Comeback Ecosystem fund talent initiatives with application due December 23.
Friday, Dec. 2, 2016 and Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2016	Information session phone calls with Cay Kimbrell, MN Comeback director of talent. Prospective applicants can attend a session to answer questions about the application process. Guidance will not be provided on proposal content. Participation in the information session does not influence decisions about grant awards.
Friday, Dec. 23, 2016	MN Comeback Ecosystem Fund talent initiatives applications due to Cay Kimbrell: ckimbrell@mncomeback.org
Early January 2017	Proposal reviewed by Talent Team educator reviewers with ranking and recommendations given to MN Comeback staff
Mid-January 2017	MN Comeback staff make final decision on approved grantee awards
Mid-January 2017	Funding awards announced for SY17-18



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Ecosystem Fund talent initiatives winter 2017 award

Organization information

Legal name of applicant organization

EIN# (Applicants who do not have an employer identification number need to have a fiscal sponsor. Please provide the information for the fiscal sponsor if applicable)

Address

Primary organization contact for request

Contact title

Contact email and phone

Name of initiative

Total amount requested

Funding term requested

Proposal submission guidance: *The word count for each question that follows are offered as a guide so that proposals provide adequate information succinctly. If more explanation is needed beyond the word count, let us know as we want to be flexible in how the proposal is structured. We anticipate responses to the questions that follow to amount to approximately 8 pages (not including the attachments required at the end of the application). We will accept applications that are under or over this anticipated range.*

Alignment with MN Comeback

Description of need – max 250 words

Include in your statement why are you seeking support from MN Comeback to do this work.

Objective – max 800 words

High-performing schools are changing the odds for students living in poverty as evidenced by proficiency rates or growth rates that outperform the state average. High-potential schools have demonstrated some success toward closing the achievement gap and have meaningful strategies and leadership in place to accelerate their performance. Outline your overall objectives, including how the investment will impact one or more of MN Comeback's talent outcomes below in high-performing and high-potential schools:

- 1. Increased instructional rigor and relevant socio-emotional support in classrooms**
- 2. Continuous professional growth and increased retention of effective teachers and school leadership teams**



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3. **Hiring and development of strongly prepared teachers in licensure shortage areas such as special education, math, science, ESL and Spanish**
4. **Dramatically increased number of people of color and native peoples who are teachers and school leadership team members**

Participant engagement – max 500 words

What specific schools/school will your strategy focus on? How are the specific needs of teachers and school leaders in these/this school reflected in your proposed strategy? Have they been involved in the development of the strategy? How will participants provide feedback on the success of your proposed strategy?

System collaboration and systems change – max 350 words

How does your strategy foster collaboration across and between school sectors (Minneapolis district, charter, independent schools)? How will your proposed strategy offer learning that can be replicated across multiple schools and school sectors?

Ability to achieve objectives and measure effectiveness

Specific activities to achieve objectives – max 500 words

Outline how you will meet your stated objectives.

Organizational partners – max 350 words

List school and organizational partners and describe how they support the program.

Qualifications and experience – max 500 words

Summarize the qualifications and experience you have in addressing the problem, working with the target population, and conducting similar or related work.

Program quality and differentiation – max 500 words

How do/will you know that you are operating a quality program? What evidence-based strategies do/will you use to yield results, evaluate and improve? What makes your program potentially more effective than similar programs that exist locally and/or nationally?

Can MN Comeback be at all supportive, lending to a successful program. If so, what are those tangible supports? Max 250 words

Impact

Outputs

Provide a bulleted list of intended outputs by target date.

Outcomes

Provide a bulleted list of intended outcomes by target date.

Will your activities target schools in IFF highest-need areas? Check any that apply:

- East Phillips and Midtown Phillips
- Phillips West and Ventura Village
- Willard-Hay
- Jordan
- Central



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- Longfellow, Seward, and Cooper
- Powderhorn Park
- Near-North
- Corcoran and Standish
- Webber-Camden and Folwell
- Whittier

How will your proposed strategy impact highest need areas? If your strategy does not target highest-need areas, explain why. Max 250 words

Do you have any plans for communications or media outreach around this program? Max 250 words

Sustainability

Continuity – max 500 words

How will your proposed strategy continue to be sustained without MN Comeback financial support?

Attachments

Please include the following as attachments to your request:

- 1) IRS determination letter (if applicable)
- 2) Program budget, including any other funders
- 3) Annual operating budget
- 4) List of current board members
- 5) Most recent audited financial statements

Application submission

Please submit your application, with accompanying attachments to Cay Kimbrell, director of talent, MN Comeback: ckimbrell@mncomeback.org. Please direct all questions to Cay at the above email or via phone: 504-427-3501.

Signature

Organization leader

Date