



Request for Proposal – Education Initiative Regional Convening Partner

Purpose

The Bush Foundation seeks a partner to plan and execute the annual education initiative regional convening, Student Centered Learning for Equity, in 2021 and 2022. Responses are due Thursday, December 3, 2020.

About the Bush Foundation

The Bush Foundation invests in great ideas and the people who power them in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography. Established in 1953 by 3M Executive Archibald Bush and his wife Edyth, the Foundation supports organizations and people to think bigger and think differently about what is possible in their communities. We work to inspire and support creative problem solving – within and across sectors – to make our region better for everyone.

Overview of the Education Initiative

For every student in the region to succeed we need an education system that works for all students. This requires a more personal, more relevant approach to education. The guiding goal for the Bush Foundation’s education initiative is to make our region the national leader in providing student-centered learning that meets the needs and ambitions of all students. We invest in efforts to make education more relevant for all students in terms of:

- WHO THEY ARE: Create learning environments that welcome and support students from all cultures and backgrounds.
- HOW THEY LEARN: Customize learning to help students learn in a manner and at a pace that meets their individual needs.
- WHERE THEY WANT TO GO: Help students imagine their future and provide them with supports tailored to get them where they want to go.

We also describe these points as the three dimensions of student-centered learning – cultural relevance, instructional relevance and future relevance.

Project Background

Since 2017, the Bush Foundation has held an annual convening with the purpose of inspiring, equipping and connecting leaders to spread student-centered learning across our region. This annual event has consistently grown in size and enthusiasm, starting with 135 attendees in the first year and building to over 600 registrants in 2020. We look to build on the momentum for years to come.

The planning process for the event has involved more and more partners in recent years. Our 2020 convening included guidance from a community advisory council, and multiple partners were involved in the planning and delivery of the event alongside the Bush Foundation.

We are excited about the enthusiasm of the event from the participants, the growing inclusivity of the planning process, as well as its effectiveness in advancing a movement for student-

centered learning for equity in our region. We believe in this work and believe we should take a lesser role in the planning process of our annual event as it evolves and is built directly by stakeholders to be even more responsive to the needs, interests and direction of the student-centered learning work in our region. We feel this is important to the movement-building goals of the education initiative and we seek a partner close to this work that can serve as the primary event manager.

Scope of Work

The regional convening is the largest event of the Foundation's education initiative each year. The role of the convening planning partner will be to spearhead the event in 2021 and 2022. The partner will plan and manage event aspects listed below, in consultation with Bush Foundation staff.

- **Vision setting** – This role will evolve over time as the Foundation seeks to reduce its prominence in the planning process and visibility in the event. While the Foundation will serve as a vision setting partner for the 2021 convening, it is the expectation that the selected partner will engage with the wider community and use those insights to set the overall vision and themes for the 2022 convening.
- **Design, planning and implementation** – The partner will manage the logistical details of planning and executing the event. They will manage the overall event budget. They will contract with other partners as needed to accomplish a successful event. Partners in the past have included: event planning consultants, venue and catering managers, virtual platform developer, filmmaker, videographer, photographer and emcees. The event should be planned using a universal design framework to ensure it is inclusive for all participants.
- **Speaker and session selection and management** – The partner will lead the process for securing racially and culturally diverse keynote speakers and other presenters for the event. They will research and recommend speakers, and the Foundation will be involved in making the final selection of speakers to ensure they reflect the spirit and values of the movement we are trying to build. The partner will develop a plan for programming to create a coherent message and conversation throughout the convening that advances the work of student-centered learning in the region.
- **Attendee cultivation and communications** – The partner will set the strategy to ensure a diverse audience from across the Bush Foundation region. In the past, the audience has included educators, policy makers, community leaders and education advocates. The partner will also lead the communications plan in consultation with the Bush Foundation communications team. Communications deliverables include website, promotion, registration management, programs and other event materials, graphics and emails.
- **Engagement to inform planning** – The partner will establish a plan for how the community of educators, advocates and others will be included in the planning process for the convening. The Foundation believes this event must be responsive to the needs of those on the ground in our region in order to advance the movement for student-centered learning. Plans should also include participant surveys to identify areas of success and opportunities for growth. Much of the participant survey content has been

determined as the Foundation will use many of the same questions from previous surveys.

- **Updates to the Foundation** – Even as the Foundation takes on a less involved role in the convening in 2021 and even more so in 2022, we would like to be in consulted and in regular communication regarding the planning of the event.

Other pertinent information:

- **Tone and focus:** The event should be inclusive of traditionally marginalized communities. Education equity and cultural relevance should be at the forefront. There must be opportunities for networking and connecting for ongoing movement building and student voice should be included in a meaningful way.
- **Event Timing:** The dates of the convenings have not been determined. The 2021 event will not happen earlier than spring 2021. The selected partner will lead the process to identify dates, which must be approved by the Foundation.
- **Budget:** The overall budget for the event each year is approximately \$200,000. This includes the planning partner costs.
- **Timing of Services:** The Foundation is seeking a partner that will be able to immediately begin planning the event upon award of the project.
- **Structure of agreement:** The awarding of this project could result in a grant or contract depending on the organization and their relationship to the work.
- **Organization location:** While it's not required, special consideration will be given to organizations located in our region (Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota or one of the 23 Native nations that share the same geography.)

Request for Proposal:

Please respond to this RFP by preparing a two- to five-page proposal that addresses the following:

- Explain how you would help us achieve a successful convening as described above and your approach to the work.
- Describe your experience with putting on events and why you are uniquely qualified to do this work. Why are you interested in this project? How does the issue of student-centered learning fit with the overall mission of your organization.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 convening must be a virtual event if held in the spring, but we may consider an in-person event if it was later in the year. We hope to be able to return to in-person programming in 2022. Please note that the foundation is open to how the convening is structured. It could take place on a single day or could be a series of events. Please describe your experience with planning and executing in-person and virtual events.
- Explain your familiarity with the concept of student-centered learning. Please share your perspectives regarding the equity in education.
- Provide a brief description of how you would interact with Bush Foundation staff to ensure solid planning and implementation.
- Provide information about you and the team that would work on this project (size of the team and its demographic makeup) and your contact information including name, email address, phone number, website or any other pertinent links.)
- Explain your approach to ensuring diversity among the contributors for this event, including subcontractors and advisors.

- Your proposed budget for the project as outlined above, including all costs to your organization.
- Optional: While we have described this as an event, we are open to alternative approaches. If you have other suggestions for accomplishing our goals to continue to advance a movement for student-centered learning for equity in the region, feel free to suggest other ideas.
- Any additional information you would like to share.

Selection Criteria:

Decisions will be made based on how well an organization fits our selection criteria. To what degree does the organization or partnership demonstrate:

- Quality of previous work and experience, including the ability to execute a unique event that is engaging, energizing and inspiring.
- Understanding of and experience working on the concept of student-centered learning and equity issues in education.
- Experience working collaboratively with clients, vendors and partners.
- Experience working in the Bush Foundation region.
- Experience working with nonprofits or foundations.
- Ability to provide services upon award of the grant or contract.

How to Apply

- Email your proposal as a Word document or PDF to Jackie Statum Allen, Bush Foundation Education Portfolio Director, at jallen@bushfoundation.org.
- Proposals should be two to five pages.
- Proposals are due by **EOD Thursday, December 3, 2020**.

If you have any questions, contact Jackie Statum Allen either via email or at 651-379-2227.

Selection and Timing

- Bush Foundation staff will review all proposals and select finalists. In mid-December all applicants will be notified by email whether or not they are moving forward in the process.
- Bush Foundation staff will schedule calls with finalists to learn more about their proposal, conduct reference calls and complete additional due diligence.
- Finalists will be notified in mid-January whether or not they have been selected as a partner.
- It is anticipated that work may begin in February/March 2021.

Thank you in advance for your response and your interest in working with the Bush Foundation.