Priority Spokane Request for Proposal (RFP)

Priority Spokane is an endeavor to create a vibrant future for Spokane County. It is through collaborative and focused efforts on improvements to economic vitality, education, the environment, health, and community safety that Spokane will be a flourishing community for all who live and work here.

Priority Spokane has identified educational attainment, specifically increasing Spokane Public Schools high school graduation rates, as a community priority. We believe that enhancing middle school students’ experience in and outside the classroom will dramatically improve high school graduation rates. Priority Spokane is requesting proposals for a student support survey that will aid in addressing this challenge.

A. Background and Description of Community Need

In 2004, Eastern Washington University’s (EWU) Institute for Policy and Economic Analysis commenced the Community Indicators Initiative (CII). This initiative involved the collection of data - or indicators - to assess the state of the Spokane community in terms of economic vitality, education, health, environment and numerous other areas. In 2005, the community indicator data for Spokane County was made public on the CII Web site (www.communityindicators.ewu.edu).

A group of community leaders involved in the CII process recognized the value of the indicators for identifying priority community issues and measuring change over time. These leaders represented local government, business, nonprofit organizations and local funders.

Utilizing the community indicator data as a reference point, the community leaders launched Priority Spokane, a collaborative and coordinated effort to:

- Identify community priorities that show the greatest potential for improving the well being of our community.
- Establish a broad base of agreement within Spokane County regarding priorities that need to be addressed.
- Develop strategies to make measurable improvement in the priority areas.
- Identify the resources and partners to carry out the strategies.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our actions and measure improvement.

The Priority Spokane Steering Committee, which leads this effort, is comprised of representatives from the following entities:

- City of Spokane
- City of Spokane Valley
- Community Building Foundation
- Eastern Washington University
- Educational Service District 101
Identifying community priorities was Priority Spokane’s first step. This was a representative process involving authorities in relevant subject areas. Task forces, which included 120 community volunteers, were formed to focus on economic vitality, education, the environment, healthy people and community safety.

In June 2009, a task force assembly, which consisted of individuals who had previously served on task forces, overwhelmingly endorsed Educational Attainment (i.e., increase high school graduation rates) as the top community priority for Spokane.

A recent Washington State Office of Public Instruction (OSPI) report indicated that in 2009 Washington State’s on-time four-year high school graduation rate from 2005 - 2009 was 73.5%. The most alarming 2009 statistic for this region relates to the on-time four-year high school graduation rate at the Spokane Public Schools (Ferris, Havermale, Lewis & Clark, North Central, Rogers and Shadle Park) – collectively 62.1%.

In summer of 2009, the Priority Spokane Steering Committee and separately the Spokane Public Schools (SPS) determined that improved programs experienced by middle school students would lead to dramatically increasing graduation rates within the six Spokane Public Schools high schools.

In spring of 2010 Priority Spokane awarded a research grant (funded by INWCF and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) to Gonzaga University to identify proven programs and strategies that enhance the middle school experience to improve high school graduation rates. Gonzaga’s final report recommended three strategies to significantly enhance the middle school experience that would measurably improve Spokane Public Schools high school graduation rates:

1. Dropout Early Warning System
2. High Academic Expectations/Achievement
3. Social (Student) Support

A copy of Gonzaga University’s final report may be found at www.priorityspokane.ewu.edu/uploadedFiles/gonzagaReport.pdf.

During an August 2010 meeting the SPS Board unanimously accepted the three recommendations in Gonzaga’s report referenced above.

As a first step to building a dropout early warning system, Spokane Public Schools secured funding to initiate a five-year historical longitudinal study to identity the risk factors that significantly contribute to student dropouts.
B. Project Research (RFP)

Contract with a consultant or organization to accomplish the following survey project:

1. With input from the Priority Spokane Steering Committee and various community stakeholders, design a student support survey (survey) that will be administered electronically to, among others, the organizations interacting with middle school students in SPS. [Note: Many of these organizations are identified in Gonzaga University’s final report (June 30, 2010), Appendix I.]

2. The survey should address such topics with the organizations identified in Appendix I (please note this is not an exhaustive list):
   a. Mission and goals of organizations
   b. Programs of organizations that interact with middle school students in SPS
   c. Organizational structure
   d. Type of clients served, number served, how often served, where served, etc.
   e. Annual budgets and expenses for programs for middle school students
   f. Number of employees – full-time equivalent (FTE)
   g. Number of volunteers (FTE)
   h. Outcomes measured and measurement tools
   i. Evidence of impact on improving high school graduation rates
   j. Organizational partnerships in and outside the classroom
   k. Location(s) of where clients served
   l. Risk factors being addressed
   m. Highest risk factors
   n. Other important risk factors that should be addressed
   o. Middle school(s) served
   p. Suggested partners in fulfilling mission

3. Summarize the survey results (descriptive and interpretative) in a written report for the Priority Spokane Steering Committee’s review and approval.

4. The final report will, among other things, be organized by schools served, clients served, evidenced-based best practices, risk factor(s) addressed, risk-factors successfully addressed, recommendations, etc.

5. Awarded organization/individual may be involved in community meetings during which the above research will be presented.

C. Monitoring and Evaluation

1. October 15, 2010 – November 15, 2010: RFP distributed
2. December 12, 2010: proposals due
3. January 31, 2011: research project commences
4. April 30, 2011: final written report on project
5. Possible Spring, Summer, Fall 2011: public presentations of project results
D. Organization’s Capacity to Accomplish Proposal

1. Please describe your organization’s strengths and capacity to implement, manage and monitor progress of the proposal.

E. Risks

1. Identify challenges to the success of project.
2. Identify how they might be overcome.

F. Key Personnel

1. Identify individual(s) who will participate in the project research.
2. Identify individual who will be the primary spokesperson for the project research.

G. Budget

All proposals should include a complete budget and a budget narrative that supports your proposal.

1. Up to $25,000 is available for the project. This project is co-funded by Empire Health Foundation, Harriet Cheney Cowles Foundation and Inland Northwest Community Foundation.
2. Request a minimum of 10% in-kind contribution from organization awarded contract.
3. No more than 5% for administrative overhead to organization awarded contract.

H. Length of Proposal

1. No more than five (5) typed pages. Can be single or double spaced.

I. Instructions for Proposal Submission (Due December 12, 2010)

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