



Request for Proposals

Research for Philanthropy Advocates Pathways to College & Career Policy Work Group

November 2021

Overview

Philanthropy Advocates, a collaboration with Educate Texas, seeks to contract with an experienced research organization to conduct quantitative and policy analysis focused on addressing this question: Are student-level policies in Texas aimed at increasing college-readiness and access in alignment with institutional-level policies that require and/or incentivize preK-12 and postsecondary institutional behavior?

Applicants should have a breadth of research skills with the ability to conduct both quantitative research and policy analysis with the intent to carry out this research project.

Philanthropy Advocates, a collaboration with Educate Texas, is a diverse funders' collaborative of over 55 private, corporate, and community foundations and United Ways. We work to protect, promote, and improve public and higher education in Texas so that all Texas students can achieve their educational goals from cradle to career.

Our Philanthropy Advocates mission is to empower Texas philanthropy to invest and engage in effective public and higher education policy and advocacy at the state level.

Our Philanthropy Advocates vision is to protect, promote, and improve public and higher education in Texas so that all Texas students can achieve their educational goals from cradle to career.

In 2019, Philanthropy Advocates joined forces with Educate Texas to advocate together on behalf of our state's 7 million public and higher education students. Educate Texas, an educational initiative of Communities Foundation of Texas, is a trusted change agent to strengthen Texas public and higher education. For more than a decade, we have worked side by side with our partners to empower students to realize their dreams and fuel a thriving Texas.

Educate Texas Mission: As a trusted change agent, we increase academic achievement and educational equity by leading programs, policy, and partnerships.

Educate Texas Vision: All Texas students, especially African-American, Latino and economically disadvantaged students, earn a college degree or credential that leads to a living wage and thriving communities.

Background

Philanthropy Advocates is a geographically and politically diverse consortium of over 55 private, corporate, and community foundations from across Texas working together to promote, protect and improve public and higher education.

Research, innovation, seeding best practices, and rapid response form the foundation of what Texas philanthropy provides to state lawmakers and policymakers. Since 2012, Philanthropy Advocates has engaged the philanthropic sector to participate in research and advocacy. Philanthropy provides the state “R&D” (research and development), while the state provides the scale necessary to bring proven policy into classrooms and higher education institutions across Texas. In 2019, we joined Educate Texas at the Communities Foundation of Texas, to further our impact.

With our members’ guidance, Philanthropy Advocates concentrates on public and higher education policy issues that have the greatest impact on equitable student outcomes, including early grade success; pathways to college and career; effective teaching; and education finance.

Philanthropy Advocates is committed to serving as a trusted, non-partisan resource that provides fact-based data on Texas public schools and postsecondary higher education institutions.

In 2021, Philanthropy Advocates’ membership once again prioritized focusing on commissioning timely, salient research within early grade success, pathways to college and career and effective teaching.

All research commissioned by Philanthropy Advocates should be conducted with the objective of educating and informing Texas policymakers and their staff with analysis/synthesis of problem statements within our current key focus areas (early grade success, pathways to college and career and effective teaching). Research findings would provide context and the landscape around problems that could be addressed through policy adjustments. Philanthropy Advocates will disseminate this research to educate and inform policymakers on the findings.

As part of its ongoing efforts to provide objective and non-partisan data on public and higher education in Texas, Philanthropy Advocates is immediately seeking proposals from organizations to conduct research in accordance with deliverable requirements.

Project Scope

Focused on supporting students in accessing and succeeding in postsecondary education, Philanthropy Advocates is commissioning research to answer the following question:

Research Question:

- Are student-level policies in Texas aimed at increasing college-readiness and success in alignment with institutional-level policies that require and/or incentivize preK-12 and postsecondary institutional behavior?

To answer this question, research should focus on the following objective:

Research Objective:

Analyze implementation of Texas law, House Bill 5 (2013, 83R) (herein HB 5), to compare student-level college and career pathways requirements to any incentives/requirements school districts and institutions of higher education (community college and universities) are held accountable to or incentivized to meet as defined by state statute and rulemaking.

Research Deliverables:

Part 1: Analyze HB 5 - Student Requirements & Incentives

Deliverables:

- Brief overview of HB 5 (2013, 85R) and subsequent policy impact to student coursework and graduation requirements.
- Overview and comparison of math and science coursework requirements in the following:
 - Math and science requirements students must achieve in each HB 5 endorsement.
 - Any other coursework distinctions across the endorsements.
 - Math and science requirements students must complete to enter “college ready” into higher education, disaggregated by type of postsecondary institution.
- Quantitative research on outcomes for each cohort of high school graduates and their post high school outcomes in college and career with a focus on the 60x30TX indicators.
 - Include comparison of career outcomes findings with current job market demands.
 - To the extent practicable, research should reflect outcomes prior to the passage of HB 5 and since its passage.

Part 2: Institutional Requirements & Incentives on College Readiness Defined in Statute & Rulemaking

Deliverables:

- Summary and analysis of current Texas statute, education code, regulations and/or incentives for school districts, community colleges and universities to ensure students are “college ready” at both the preK-12 and postsecondary levels.
 - Indicate both alignment and misalignment of college ready standards across institutions, including how meeting the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) threshold factors into those determinations.

Part 3: Student-Level Versus Institutional-Level Drivers of Behavior

Deliverable:

- Analysis of HB 5 cohort students in Part 1 who met “college ready” standards across each institutional level analyzed in Part 2. Where available, analysis of HB 5 cohort students who met “college ready” standards but needed additional remediation.
- Identify competing, complementary, or unrelated aspects of the current education landscape in statute/rules that may indicate missed opportunities and/or gaps for students to successfully transition to postsecondary education.

Project Phases

The scope of this project will consist of three primary phases reflective of grant payment installments, each on one statement of work. The first phase will involve identifying a project plan and timeline. The second phase of the project will consist of conducting the research. The third phase will involve developing final deliverables.

Scope of Work

Research commissioned by Philanthropy Advocates may be a mixture of quantitative and qualitative work, as well as synthesis of work done in the field and applied with a statewide, statutory and regulatory context to inform the primary audience – Texas policymakers.

Successful proposals will identify necessary data sources and methods for addressing the research questions. Once data needs and research methodology are identified, the researcher will be responsible for executing the research project and developing the outlined deliverables. The scope of work includes securing any necessary ERC data, data sharing agreements and/or

IRB approvals needed. The researcher will also be responsible for developing a robust project plan that outlines regular status updates, interim analyses/findings and timelines for drafts and annual reports. The project plan should include regular meetings with Philanthropy Advocates staff and the researcher.

All research should be presented in a written narrative report-style format, along with easily consumable communications materials (i.e one-pager summary of findings, presentation slide deck, infographics, key messages, and graphics for social media platforms) emphasizing key findings from the research.

The final report should include a description and explanation of the research and methodology, (including the statutes and rules examined and any engagement with state agency staff, postsecondary institution leads, and/or other stakeholders) along with links to access any research/data that is referenced or the source of data for all metrics and findings.

The final report should include a clear set of findings, a conclusion, and any potential policy opportunities related to research findings. The final report should include an acknowledgement to Philanthropy Advocates for commissioning the work.

Timeline and Deliverables

Deliverables should be final by July 1, 2022. The researcher will work with Philanthropy Advocates staff to determine an appropriate timeline for the work based on research needs and deliver a project plan.

A draft project plan is required within an applicant's proposal. A final project plan should be complete within one month of signing the grant contract.

Period of Contract

The period of the initial contract is December 31, 2021 to July 1, 2022.

Proposal Requirements

Philanthropy Advocates will award grants to nonprofit organizations, public entities, or for-profit organizations with demonstrated experience and capacity to engage diverse audiences in important education issues. Each organization may only submit one proposal.

Proposals should include the following:

1. **Qualifications and Experience of Firm and Personnel** – demonstration of knowledge and experience related to project scope; reputation for on-time delivery; and commitment to collaborative approach. Please include references for similar projects and staff biographies of key personnel that would be assigned to the project, as well as

a list of the organization's Board of Directors. The successful applicant should demonstrate their understanding and impact in policy analysis.

2. **Proposed Research Design** - demonstration of research expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research with preliminary, high-level approach to methodology, data collection strategy, and analytic deliverables. Please include:
 - a. Where data will be housed and processes for ensuring secure data transfer and management.
 - b. Identification of individuals who will manage and facilitate the project, including resumes.
 - c. Sample work products that demonstrate ability to complete this project. Emphasis should be on showing the quality of deliverables and work, rather than the content.
3. **Work Plan** – a plan outlining the tasks, activities, timeline and evaluation plan necessary to provide the deliverables outlined above.
4. **Budgets (Organization and Project)** – Please include the proposed project and the organization budget. The project budget must detail costs necessary to accomplish the project objectives and activities outlined in the task/activity plan, including travel. Proposals should include a full project budget and requests should not exceed \$100,000. Should applicants determine a budget exceeding \$100,000 is necessary to deliver high quality deliverable requirements, applicants should identify the request amount and include rationale for the purpose of these additional dollars.
5. **W-9** – completed W-9 for the organization: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>
6. **Latest organization financial audit.**

If selected as grant recipient, ACH information will be required within two days of award notification.

Proposal Submission & Questions

Proposals are due by end of day Friday, December 3, 2021.

Applicants should submit proposals via email to Becky Calahan, Deputy Director of Philanthropy Advocates, at bcalahan@cftexas.org. Please reach out to Becky as necessary with questions in advance of submission.