

Request for Proposals
Alliance District Disparities Reduction Work and Monitoring Plan Project
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
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Hartford, CT 06106
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I. Background:

The Hartford Foundation, in partnership with six Alliance Districts¹, seeks consultant proposals for a project that will support the six districts in the creation of work and monitoring plans that are part of districts' grant requests to the Foundation. These plans will articulate student disparities the districts intend to address through the work of their Offices of Family, School, and Community Partnership. The plan will also describe the activities/interventions to be implemented and methods and measures that will allow districts to monitor their progress and measure their effectiveness in reducing the disparities. The consultant is also expected to participate in district leader convenings to provide their cross-district observations on districts' efforts to reduce disparities and monitor their progress and measure effectiveness in this work.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford, Connecticut region, dedicated to improving the quality of life for area residents. One of the oldest and largest community foundations in the country, the Hartford Foundation has awarded grants of more than \$700 million since 1925 and has provided a host of other support and training services, to a broad range of area nonprofit organizations.

The Foundation works with six² of the Greater Hartford Region's most challenged school districts to provide learning supports through the integration of family, school, and community partnership strategies. These districts include Bloomfield Public Schools, East Hartford Public Schools, Manchester Public Schools, Vernon Public Schools, Windsor Public Schools, and Windsor Locks Public Schools. In an effort to ensure that these Alliance District investments are impactful and sustainable, the Foundation partners with state and district education leaders, public policy decision makers and nonprofit organizations. Through these endeavors, the State Department of Education Commissioner Roundtable on Family, School and Community Partnerships was developed. The Foundation also regularly holds convenings for superintendents and district teams

¹ For more information about Connecticut's Alliance District program, please use this link: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Alliance-Districts/Alliance-Districts>

² The Hartford Foundation also partners with a seventh Alliance District, Hartford Public Schools; however one-on-one consulting to support the creation of an HPS work and monitoring plan is not needed within the scope of services outlined in this RFP. However, HPS leaders will be present and participate in district leader convenings described in this document.

of educators, providers, and parents to share learning, best practices and solutions for family, school, and partnership and engagement

Over the past several years, the Foundation has invested in the development and sustainability of Offices of Family, School and Community Partnership (OFSCP) in the six Alliance districts in its region to promote student wellbeing, learning, and success.³ The Foundation's new strategic plan⁴ aims to address the region's most persistent disparities related to race/ethnicity, place (ZIP code) and/or income. In its partnership with the Alliance districts, the Foundation builds upon this existing district infrastructure, by employing the OFSCPs as vehicles to address disparities related to race, place, and income in these six public school districts and communities.

II. Project Description:

The Hartford Foundation, in partnership with six Alliance Districts, is commissioning a consultant to complete three central project components including: 1) creation of a common work and monitoring plan template; 2) technical assistance to Alliance Districts to complete and operationalize work and monitoring plans; and 3) contribution to district leader convenings by sharing their cross-district perspectives on the project. These components are outlined in greater depth in the section below.

- *Work and Monitoring Plan Template:* The consultant will create a common template for all six districts to use and submit as part of their grant requests to the Foundation. The template will capture districts' identified disparities that they intend to address, pinpoint the activities and/or interventions to be employed to reduce these disparities, indicate anticipated outputs/outcomes, and specify how the districts will monitor progress and measure effectiveness of this work (including methods employed and measures/metrics to be used). The plans should be clear, succinct, and ideally include graphical depictions (e.g. logic models, theories of change, or other visualizations). This template will be submitted to the Hartford Foundation for review and final approval in October 2020.
- *Technical Assistance to Alliance Districts to Create and Operationalize Work and Monitoring Plans:* The consultant will provide individualized technical assistance to each of the six Alliance Districts to complete work and monitoring plans that identify the disparity or disparities a district intends to address, outline the activities/interventions to be implemented by the OFSCP that will aid in reducing the disparity/disparities, and specify the methods and measures the district will use to monitor progress and measure effectiveness. These work and monitoring plans will be submitted as part of the districts'

³ District names for these offices vary including the East Hartford Public Schools Office of Family and Partnership, Manchester Public Schools Office of Equity and Partnerships,, Windsor Public Schools Office of Family and Partnership, and Windsor Locks Public Schools Office of Partnerships.

⁴ An overview of the Hartford Foundation's strategic plan can be found here: <https://www.hfpg.org/what-we-do/our-strategic-commitment>

grant requests to the Hartford Foundation in early January 2021⁵ and should reflect disparity reduction work implemented through June 2022. As part of this planning process, the consultant will complete the following tasks:

- **Provide technical assistance sessions to aid each district in completing a work and monitoring plan using the template.** These sessions (estimated two to four sessions for each district) will take place from October through early December 2020. The consultant will meet with district teams to complete the plans (membership of the teams to be determined by the districts with guidance from the consultant). The consultant can anticipate that districts will have preliminarily identified disparities they would like to address; however, the consultant should be prepared to help the district articulate the disparity or disparities using data. In creating the monitoring portion of the plan, the consultant should help districts incorporate equitable data practices and considerations. They should also seek to leverage existing data and data collection efforts (quantitative and qualitative) in an effort to minimize burden on districts and communities. However, new data collection efforts could be included in light of information gaps, district interest, and/or equity considerations. The consultant should expect to collaborate with each district to develop the best number and type of TA sessions (e.g. participating in existing district meetings, new meetings focused on plan development, email communication, and sharing relevant materials that will help the consultant to contextualize the districts' focus on particular disparities). The consultant should be prepared to provide all of this TA virtually – with the feasibility of in-person consultation dependent on the covid-19 pandemic and associated health and safety concerns.
- **Provide follow-up technical assistance sessions to districts.** In spring 2021, the consultant will offer an estimated two to four follow-up sessions to each of the districts in order to advise on any issues or related to operationalizing the monitoring and measurement of efforts to address disparities through their OFSCPs. Follow-up topics might include continued guidance on measures, implementation of data collection activities, analytical approaches, and/or sensemaking. Again, the consultant should collaborate with each district to develop the best number and type of follow-up TA sessions and be prepared to provide these sessions virtually (depending on the covid-19 pandemic).
- ***Participation in District Leader Convenings:*** The consultant will participate in district leader convenings scheduled throughout the school year (October 2020 - June 2021) including two Superintendents Community of Practice meetings and nine District Leader Think Tank sessions (a total of 11 meetings). Consultants are included in these opportunities in order to be able to share their cross-district perspective on disparities reduction work. Potential discussion topics that the consultant might engage in with

⁵ Due to somewhat different funding timelines for districts, Vernon Public Schools will not be submitting a full grant request (having received a grant in the summer of 2020); however, in fulfilling the requirements of that grant, Vernon is expected to submit a work and monitoring plan in December 2020.

convening participants include, but are not limited to, sharing promising monitoring/measuring/learning approaches that can be adopted by other districts, troubleshooting issues, and discussing common measures. Consultants should facilitate discussion about these topics in engaging, meaningful, and participatory ways. Appendix A of this RFP contains a schedule of the Superintendents Community of Practice and District Leader Think Tank meetings.

III. Anticipated Activities and Deliverables:

This project provides the Hartford Foundation and the six Alliance Districts with an exceptional opportunity to jointly reflect on the work of the OFSCP to address student disparities. To support the project, the consultant will develop a project plan for the following activities and deliverables:

- 1) Work with the Hartford Foundation and Alliance District representatives to finalize the project plan.
- 2) Create a work and monitoring plan template for districts to use to delineate a disparity or disparities to be address, activities/interventions to be implemented, expected outputs and outcomes, and means of monitoring progress and measuring effectiveness.
- 3) Provide technical assistance to six Alliance Districts to create and operationalize work and monitoring plans. The estimated maximum number of TA sessions with each of the six districts is eight sessions (for an overall maximum total of 48 sessions). The Foundation anticipates that each district will need two to four sessions in fall 2020 to draft the plans and then two to four follow-up meetings in spring 2021; however, the consultant will work with each district to determine the right balance of sessions needed for plan creation and follow-up. The consultant should be prepared to engage with Alliance District teams remotely using videoconferencing and online collaboration tools.
- 4) Participate in district leader meetings (including the Superintendents Community of Practice, and the District Leaders Think Tank) from October 2020-May 2021 (total maximum of 11 meetings).⁶ The estimated time commitment for each meeting ranges from thirty minutes to two hours per session depending upon the agenda. The consultant should anticipate participating in most or all of these meetings virtually using videoconferencing and other online collaboration tools (the Think Tank sessions are all held virtually). The consultant will work with Hartford Foundation staff to identify topics relevant to this project to include in the meeting agendas, determine the time needed to discuss each topic, and arrange for the distribution materials to district leaders (if needed).

⁶ A schedule of district leader meetings is found in Appendix A of this RFP.

- 5) Monthly project check-in meetings with Hartford Foundation staff to provide updates on districts' progress on work and monitoring plans and reflections on district leader convenings – with particular attention to ways the Foundation can refine or improve its role. These check-ins would be done virtually and be of about thirty minutes in duration.
- 6) Produce a final project memorandum and slide deck presentation to Hartford Foundation (to be shared with districts) that includes lessons learned (e.g. what went well and what could be improved) in the creation of work and monitoring plans and participation in district leader meetings. The memo could also include recommendations for future support and resources to the Alliance Districts including forms of technical assistance (specifying topics or issues), the purpose and structure of convenings including district leader meetings, or other opportunities for additional resources or aspects of partnership.

IV. Budget

The Hartford Foundation estimates a project budget up to a maximum of \$80,000.

The overall cost and level of detail provided in the budget will be factors in the evaluation of proposals. This RFP outlines some details of the project (e.g. timeline, anticipated deliverables) that should inform the budget.

The Hartford Foundation encourages consultants to highlight any assumptions made in preparing the proposed approach and identify any budget implications that can be anticipated related to these assumptions.

V. Proposal Content:

To ensure that HFPG can make the most efficient and equitable comparison among respondents to this RFP, proposals must be submitted as follows:

- With no margins less than one (1) inch, and in Times New Roman 12 pt. font
 - No longer than 10 pages, single-spaced excluding Appendices A, B, and C as noted below.
 - Organized to address the items listed below.
- a) Consultant's or primary contact's name, title, business address, phone number, email address and web address. *For nonprofit consultants, please review the Hartford Foundation's [basic guidelines](#) for grantmaking and [key policies](#). We will accept proposals from consultants based within and outside the Hartford region.*

- b) Approach – describe the process by which you propose to meet the requested project activities and deliverables listed above in section III. The consultant should note and provide a rationale for any deviation from the anticipated components (e.g. number of sessions, timeline).
- c) Tasks and timeline – provide an anticipated timeline needed to complete the activities discussed above (including tasks and responsibilities belonging to the consultant, the Hartford Foundation, Alliance Districts, or other stakeholders).
- d) Summary of relevant experience and staffing plan – summarize the consultant’s qualifications for this project and relevant experience, particularly any past work in Connecticut, Connecticut public schools, K-12 education, family and community engagement, guiding creation of monitoring/evaluation plans, evaluating interventions designed to reduce disparities, and working with communities of practice. If the proposal includes a team of consultants, the proposal should also specify how the project staff are allocated to the project activities (i.e. which staff person will serve as project lead, which staff will work on each activity, and which staff person will serve as lead on each activity).
- e) Equity considerations – describe how the consultant will address equity concerns in their approach to this project including, but not limited to: (1) Unconscious/implicit bias, (2) Cultural responsiveness (3) Power dynamics within communities and groups.
- f) Budget and cost (Appendix A) – provide a budget that is all-inclusive (covering labor, expenses, travel, fees, overhead, and administration), with hourly rates for the personnel assigned, estimated hours for those team members assigned, and an estimated total cost for the entire project. The Foundation will accept consultants’ standard budget formats that address these items.
- g) Resumes of personnel (Appendix B) – provide resume(s) of consultant(s) who will be assigned to this project and list the responsibilities of each for this project. Personnel submitted and approved for this activity cannot be substituted.
- h) References (Appendix C: 1 page) – provide at least three current references for similar types of projects, as well as a brief description of the scope of your work for these references, the year completed, and a contact name and telephone number for each one.

VI. Anticipated Timeline:

RFP distribution, response and review

Aug. 6, 2020	RFP distributed
Aug. 31, 2020	Proposal submission deadline (by 5 p.m. EST)
Sept. 22, 2020	Consultant Selection Announced

Project components

Sept. 29, 2020	Project kick-off meeting with Hartford Foundation and Alliance Districts
Oct. 30, 2020	Finalization of work and monitoring plan template
Oct.-Dec. 2020	Consultant meets with districts to create work and monitoring plans
January 11, 2021	Districts submit grant requests with work and monitoring plans
Jan-June 2021	Consultant provides follow-up sessions to districts
Oct. 2020-May 2021	Consultant participates in district leader convenings

VII. Proposal Submission:

Please submit your proposal by 5:00 p.m. EST on Monday, August 31, 2020 to the Hartford Foundation Research and Evaluation unit at: research@hfpg.org

Questions about the RFP and project can also be submitted to research@hfpg.org. The Foundation anticipates it will respond to questions on an individual basis. If the nature and number of questions warrant it, the Foundation will develop an FAQ and distribute it directly to those who made inquiries and/or broadly via the Foundation's research and evaluation webpage: <https://www.hfpg.org/our-approach/our-research-and-evaluation-unit/>

VIII. Appendix A: Schedule of District Leader Convenings

Superintendents Community of Practice		District Leader Think Tank Meetings
Bi-Annually		Monthly
Thursday, October 22, 2020		October 16, 2020
Tuesday, March 30, 2021		November 20, 2020
		December 18, 2020
		January 15, 2021
		February 19, 2021
		March 19, 2021
		April 16, 2021
		May 21, 2021
		June 18, 2021