

NASH CATALYST FUND
Course Sharing and Course Flexibility Focus I Request for Proposals
(RFP)

Issued: April 19, 2024
Responses due: May 15, 2024 at 9:00am ET via Email to Catalyst@nash.edu
Contact: Dan Knox, Institute for Systems Innovation & Improvement
Director, NASH
Catalyst@nash.edu

About the NASH Catalyst Fund

With generous funding from the Dell Foundation, the National Association of System Heads (NASH) is thrilled to launch a new Catalyst Fund round related to system-level course sharing, meaning the collaborative delivery of courses across institutions (i.e. cross-registration). This may include projects that enable a student registered at their home campus to take courses at another campus within the same or different system to provide more robust course offerings, alleviate bottleneck courses, or collaboratively deliver degree programs. Course sharing and course flexibility projects may include both online and in-person courses, and address areas such as technology, data, policy, revenue sharing, stakeholder engagement, raising student awareness, and financial aid. The Catalyst Fund impact will be far reaching but the concept is simple: through philanthropic support, NASH will be able to recognize and incentivize the development of your big ideas that, once proven to work, have the potential to be scaled not only across your system but amongst your peers around the country.

The NASH Catalyst Fund Spring 2024 will encourage broad engagement of system members in Course Sharing and Course Flexibility promising practices that enable equitable student success outcomes that are scalable to fellow systems.

The available levels of Catalyst Fund awards and the purposes are as follows:

- **Level 1: Prove (up to \$5,000)** - You have implemented or plan to implement an intervention that shows signs of positive impact
- **Level 2: Expand (up to \$7,500)** - You have tested or plan to test your concept locally or with another system and have promising results to share
- **Level 3: Analyze (up to \$10,000)** - You have promising results to share and are requesting funds for a deeper analysis to improve the concept or solve the problem
- **Level 4: Scale (up to \$25,000)** - Funding to expand the implementation of the identified best practice to all campuses within the system

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For the current Course Sharing RFP, NASH has \$200,000 in available funding and anticipates making most awards at Levels 1-4 to maximize representation of different systems.

Background on RFP

We are seeking systems' nominations of interventions that demonstrate "positive deviance" at one or more of their constituent universities or colleges and/or at the system office. Positive deviance is an approach to behavioral and social change based on the observation that in any community there are people whose uncommon but successful behaviors or strategies enable them to find better solutions to a problem than their peers, despite facing similar challenges and having no more resources or knowledge than their peers.

Timeline

April 17, 2024	Catalyst Fund Webinar
April 19, 2024	Catalyst Fund RFP Release
May 15, 2024	RFP Responses due at 9:00am ET
May 31, 2024	Preliminary Award Notifications
June 2024	Awards Finalized
TBD	NASH Webinar, SuperConvening, or other event to disseminate information about the awarded interventions

Please note that the period between award notification to award finalization will be used for NASH to collaborate with awardees to finalize award levels and terms.

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Proposal Submission

Funding from the Catalyst Fund will be distributed by NASH based on review by NASH staff for alignment with the guidelines and criteria below. The proposal and funding process will proceed as follows:

1. In order to be eligible to be recognized with a funding award, systems must submit a nomination using the provided form by May 15 at 9:00am ET. The completed form and narrative responses should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document or PDF email attachment to Catalyst@nash.edu. **Please make sure to include the words Course Flexibility in the subject line with Attn: Dan Knox in the body of the email**, so that the materials are shared with the appropriate department.
2. Systems whose nominated proposals will be recognized with a funding award will receive a notification no later than May 31, 2024 and will collaborate with NASH to determine the final award and terms by June 2024.

Please note:

- Systems may nominate more than one intervention for awards but must submit a separate proposal form for each intervention. Proposals may be representative of emergent/successful interventions at the system office, at one institution, or at multiple institutions. If the proposal includes an intervention being implemented at multiple institutions, the program administration must be aligned in methodology and resources at the system level or in an organized way across all participating institutions.
- While systems must *submit* the proposals, the narrative can be written by any individual affiliated with the nominated intervention.

Proposal Format

Proposals must be completed in the provided form and responsive to all of the following elements to be eligible for recognition:

Project Summary Details

Proposals must include a title, a one-sentence description of the intervention's mission, the name(s) of the system(s) and/or institution(s) currently implementing the intervention, and the number of individuals served (past and present) by the intervention.

Executive Summary

Systems should briefly outline the intent, methodology, and impact of the intervention, focusing on how the demonstrated outcomes contribute to the Power of Systems Imperatives and/or Refugee Resettlement Initiative as well as the potential for the intervention to be scaled or replicated at additional institutions within or external to the system.

Amount of Funding Requested

The available levels of funding and the purposes are as follows:

- **Level 1: Prove (up to \$5,000)** - You have implemented or plan to implement an intervention that shows signs of positive impact
- **Level 2: Expand (up to \$7,500)** - You have tested or plan to test your concept locally or with another system and have promising results to share
- **Level 3: Analyze (up to \$10,000)** - You have promising results to share and are requesting funds for a deeper analysis to determine what works to improve the concept or solve the problem
- **Level 4: Scale (up to \$25,000)** - Funding to begin to expand the implementation of the identified best practice to all campuses within the system

Narrative that Addresses the Following:

The review of proposals will focus mainly on **methodology, impact, relevance, and scalability:**

- **Methodology:**
 - What problem are you trying to solve and why are you well positioned to solve it?
 - How is/was the intervention developed, implemented, and progress monitored?
 - What is/was the timeline for development and implementation and how long was the intervention implemented before demonstrating results? (A visual representation of the timeline may be included as a single page attachment, but is not required.)
 - What specific inputs—including financial, human capital, and physical resources—were invested to ensure/support successful outcomes of the intervention? (A budget may be included as a single page attachment, but is not required.)
- **Impact:**
 - What is/was the intended impact of the intervention and was that intention met or exceeded?
 - What are/were the outputs and outcomes in terms of discrete data points (to the extent available), including the number of individuals supported, improvements to retention, graduation rates, equity, and inclusion.
- **Relevance:**
 - How does this proposal contribute to current and emerging challenges facing public higher education?

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- **Scalability:**
 - What is/was the current scale of adoption of this intervention from the system perspective?
 - How/could the proposal be scaled to reach more individuals in the populations being served?
 - What, if any, are the current obstacles to scaling and how could they be surmounted?

The review of proposals will also take into account **collaboration, sustainability, and dissemination:**

- **Collaboration:**
 - How does the intervention demonstrate interdisciplinary, cross-functional/programmatic/institution collaboration toward improved outcomes? This collaboration may already be in place or may be a targeted next step.
- **Sustainability:**
 - What thought has been put into sustaining the work at this stage?
 - What conditions would have to be met to ensure short- and long-term sustainability?
- **Dissemination:**
 - How could/is the intervention be/ing replicated within the institution (as relevant), across institutions, and across systems and states?

Criteria for Catalyst Fund Proposals

Proposals should adhere to the criteria and eligibility requirements outlined below to provide an adequate basis for review and evaluation. Proposals that meet the favorable criteria are more likely to be eligible for Level 3-4 awards.

Required	Favorable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrative is responsive to the prompts• Serves 2- and/or 4-year undergraduate students as part of a credential or degree program• Has been in place for at least one cohort or academic year with early indicators of positive outcomes• Submitted with the support of system leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrative fully addresses the prompts• Has demonstrated outcomes for multiple cohorts or academic years• Already garnered or is garnering positive attention at the campus/local, system, state, or federal level

Terms and Assurances

NASH reserves the right to:

- Request clarification or information that may not be provided within proposals without promise of eventual award
- Adjust the RFP timeline as necessary
- Make an award for a different amount than that proposed
- Make an award for an amount distinct from the levels of funding described herein based on the needs and opportunities demonstrated in the proposal
- Publicize award recipients and publicly celebrate the impacts of the awarded interventions
- Reject any or all awards and discontinue this RFP process without obligation or liability

Awardees must:

- Be part of a NASH member system
- Be available for a follow-up interview with NASH staff regarding the awarded intervention
- Be available to present the intervention at a future NASH event and/or webinar (to be scheduled in coordination with awardees)
- Submit outcome data to NASH regularly (at least annually for up to three years, through December 2028) to support NASH in monitoring the ongoing implementation and sustainability of the intervention