



NASH CATALYST FUND

Request for Proposals (RFP) – P-20 Partnerships

Responses due June 17, 2024

Background on P-20 Partnerships RFP

The National Association of Higher Education Systems ([NASH](#)) is excited to announce the launch of a new request for proposals for a Catalyst Fund aimed at identifying, expanding, and assessing innovative approaches to P-20 collaborations. The Catalyst Fund aims to lift up examples of “systemness” that advance educational opportunity and excellence through collaborations that span the educational continuum from pre-K through postsecondary education.

NASH is seeking examples of meaningful partnerships between pre-K-12 and postsecondary entities (“P-20 partnerships”) from across the nation that demonstrate efforts to “seed, test, and scale” what works to advance student success. This RFP emphasizes the inherent interdependency between P-12 and postsecondary systems of education in effectively preparing the workforce and engaged citizens of tomorrow.

This RFP serves as an important first step in identifying promising and proven P-20 partnerships that have the potential for replication and scale across diverse systems, states, and settings. Ultimately, NASH hopes to build a community of practice that builds the capacity of P-20 partnerships to be change agents in their local context, as well as models for the nation.

NASH has established priority areas for P-20 partnerships through this RFP:

- **Early college high school** – Partnerships focused on providing students with opportunities to earn college credit while in high school through dual or concurrent enrollment, comprehensive early college high school settings, and similar offerings.
- **Career pathways and P-20 transitions** – Partnerships focused on ensuring students can seamlessly transfer from high school to college and/or career, including efforts to align high school graduation and college admissions requirements, career and technical education credit articulation, summer bridge programs, guided pathways, eliminating remedial coursework through early intervention, and similar initiatives.
- **Educator recruitment and preparation** – Partnerships focused on encouraging P-12 and/or postsecondary students to pursue careers teaching in P-12 schools. This may include grow-your-own programs, student teaching placements or residencies, and related initiatives.

NASH also welcomes responses from systems and institutions engaged in P-20 partnerships outside of the identified categories that are responsive to a prominent problem of practice in your local context, including **P-20 partnerships that leverage longitudinal data systems to inform policy and practice**.

Eligible partnerships must:

- Demonstrate meaningful commitment from both the P-12 and postsecondary partners, exhibited by explicit agreements, staffing assignments, resource commitments, joint advocacy, or other demonstrable practices or structures;
- Have explicit goals related to improving the preparation or outcomes of P-12 and/or postsecondary students and teachers;
- Have been in effect for at least one academic year; and

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- Be an ongoing active partnership with long-term goals, as opposed to ad hoc work to update a policy or implement a practice that does not require ongoing engagement

Preference will be given to partnerships that already engage more than one institution of higher education and/or a higher education system office.

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

- Level 1: Prove (up to \$10,000) - You have implemented a partnership that shows signs of positive impact
- Level 2: Expand (up to \$15,000) – Your partnership involves multiple institutions or partners and has promising results to share
- Level 3: Analyze (up to \$25,000) - You have promising results to share and are seeking funds for a deeper analysis to improve the partnership for expansion/replication

Successful applicants will:

- Receive a recognition award of at least \$10,000 that can be spent flexibly in support of the awarded partnership
- Be recognized by NASH via press release and highlighted in publications regarding best practices in P-20 partnerships
- Be invited to participate in a P-20 Partnership Community of Practice (pending funding)

About the NASH Catalyst Fund

The NASH Catalyst Fund encourages broad engagement of system members in sharing promising practices that are leading to equitable student success outcomes scalable to fellow institutions and systems. The hotspots of best practices recognized through the Catalyst Fund demonstrate actions that are already underway and proving to be successful with the potential to have a catalytic impact in increasing credential and degree completion, enhancing upward social mobility, and decreasing student debt.

For the current RFP, NASH has \$200,000 in available funding to support P-20 partnerships and anticipates making most awards at the \$10,000 level.

RFP Timeline

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| May 7, 2024 | Catalyst Fund RFP released via email |
| June 17, 2024 at 12pm ET | RFP Responses due via email to catalyst@nash.edu |
| July 2024 | Awards finalized and announced |

Eligibility

At this time, this RFP is open to NASH member systems and their institutions. Nominated partnerships may be at the campus or system level, but all applications must be submitted via email to catalyst@nash.edu by a representative of your NASH member system office.

Please note:

- Systems may nominate more than one partnership but must submit a separate form for each partnership.

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- Submissions may be representative of partnerships at the system office, at one institution, or at multiple institutions.
- While systems must submit the responses to NASH and the systems (or an institution within the system) must be the direct recipient of the award, the application can be written by any individual affiliated with the partnership.

Criteria for Catalyst Fund Submissions

Submissions should adhere to the criteria outlined below to provide an adequate basis for review and evaluation.

| Required | Favorable |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative is responsive to the prompts • Explicit partnership with specific P-12 entities • Specifies student success goals • Directly addresses the priority areas of another prominent problem of practice in your context • Has been in place for at least one academic year with early indicators of positive outcomes • Involves at least one two- or four-year institution within your system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative fully addresses the prompts • Meaningful partnership as indicated by a letter of support from a P-12 partner • Has specific, measurable student success goals supported by progress monitoring • Demonstrates potential for replication or scale • Has demonstrated outcomes for multiple cohorts or academic years • Involves multiple institutions or system-wide |

Submission Format

Responses must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document email attachment using the **provided form** (attachment “Catalyst Fund RFP Form_P-20”). Forms must be submitted via email to catalyst@nash.edu by 12:00pm ET on Monday, June 17, 2024.

Submissions must be responsive to all of the following elements to be eligible for recognition:

Partnership Summary Details

Submissions must include a title, a one-sentence description of the partnership, the name(s) of the partner(s) currently engaged, and the number of individuals served (past and present) by the partnership.

System Endorsement

While the application does not need to be signed by anyone at your NASH member system office, we ask that you certify that your system head or their designee is aware and supportive of your submission.

Project Contacts

Partnerships must be represented by both a postsecondary system/institution project contact and a representative from a pre-K-12-focused organization (i.e., district, school, etc.)

- Optional: For more favorable consideration, you may wish to include a letter or statement of support for your application from a P-12 partner.

Executive Summary

Respondents should briefly outline the intent, structure, and impact of the partnership, focusing on how it recognizes the interdependency between P-12 and postsecondary education systems as well as the potential for replication and scale.

Narrative that Addresses the Following:

The review of submissions will focus mainly on structure, impact, relevance, and scalability:

- **Structure:**
 - What was the impetus for the P-20 partnership? What problem(s) are you trying to solve?
 - How was the partnership developed?
 - What supportive policies, practices, and structures ensure the success of the partnership? This might include longitudinal data systems, dedicated staff time, recurring funding sources, statutory requirements, etc.
 - What specific inputs—including financial, human capital, and physical resources—are invested to ensure/support successful outcomes of the partnership?
 - *A list of partnership participants, timeline, or budget may be included as a single page attachment but is not required.*

- **Impact:**
 - What are the student success-related goals of the partnership?
 - How were goals set and how are they progress monitored through shared data or other structures?
 - Have any interim goals or milestones already been met or exceeded? Please describe.
 - What are the outputs and outcomes in terms of discrete and disaggregated data points (to the extent available) on student and teacher preparation and success?
 - *Visual representations of impact data may be included as a single page attachment in numerical chart form but are not required. Respondents are advised to adhere to all relevant student privacy policies when sharing data.*

- **Relevance:**
 - How does this partnership relate to the three focus areas for the RFP (early college high school, career pathways and P-20 transitions, and educator recruitment and preparation) or how does it address another prominent problem of practice in your local context?
 - How could/does the partnership serve as a model for other institutions, systems, and states?
 - How would recognition and funding through this Catalyst Fund RFP support your partnership in meeting its goals?

- **Scalability:**
 - What is the current scale of engagement with this partnership? How many P-12 and postsecondary entities are participating and to what extent?
 - How/could the partnership be expanded or scaled to reach more individuals in the population(s) being served?
 - What, if any, are the current obstacles to scaling and how could they be surmounted?

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While the aforementioned areas are the most highly weighted aspects of the proposal review process, the review of submissions will also take into account collaboration, sustainability, and dissemination:

- **Collaboration:**
 - How does the partnership demonstrate meaningful collaboration between P-12 and postsecondary partners?
 - How does your partnership reflect equality/equity of commitment, voice, and benefits to/from the partners?
- **Sustainability:**
 - What structures are in place to ensure the sustainability of the partnership?
 - What conditions would have to be met to ensure short- and long-term sustainability?
- **Dissemination:**
 - How could/is the partnership be/ing replicated within your context (as relevant), across institutions, and across systems and states?

Terms and Assurances

NASH reserves the right to:

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

Awardees must:

- Refrain from sharing personally identifiable student information in proposal materials.
- Participate in a follow-up interview with NASH staff regarding the partnership.
- To the maximum extent practicable, be available to present about their partnership at future NASH virtual or in-person events at the request of NASH staff.
- Share outcome data at least annually for up to three years (December 2027) to support NASH in monitoring the ongoing implementation and sustainability of the partnership.
- Accept awards through their system office, an institution within the system, or a foundation affiliated with the system or its institution. Catalyst Fund awards cannot be issued to entities that are not postsecondary institutions or systems, but the funds may be passed through to an entity responsible for implementing the awarded partnership.

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- Expend awarded funds solely in support of the awarded partnership. Allowable uses of funds include but are not limited to paying for direct services to the intended beneficiaries of the partnership including scholarships and stipends, if applicable; purchases of services or goods in support of the partnership; travel related to the partnership; salaries or benefits of staff; and event expenses related to the partnership.
- Given the intent and limited size of Catalyst Fund awards, indirect/overhead costs are **not** an allowable use of funds.
- Respond within 45 days to NASH's requests for updates on implementation of the partnership, to take place no more than twice annually throughout the period of performance, including questions related to any changes in methodology, scope, impact, or outcomes.
- Grant NASH permission to publicize the partnership, including press releases and related website content regarding the partnership based on information provided in the Awardee's request for proposals response and future reports to NASH.

Questions

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to Jessica Todtman, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of NASH, at jtodtman@nash.edu.

Submissions

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