



**New England
Literacy Resource
Center**

Transition to College and Careers Pilot Project

Request for Proposals

May, 2008

Submission Deadline: 5pm, June 16, 2008

**A Grant Program of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation
in Partnership with the New England Literacy Resource Center at World
Education, Inc.**

Transition to College and Careers Pilot Project

I. INTRODUCTION TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation, in collaboration with the New England Literacy Resource Center at World Education, Inc., invites proposals from partnerships to develop pilot programs that enable adult learners (ESOL, Adult Diploma and GED program graduates, and adults with HS diplomas who have been out of school for at least 5 years) to enroll and succeed in college with the goal of accessing specific career pathways in health care services.

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

In 2000, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation (the “Foundation”) launched the New England ABE-To-College Transition Project directed toward creating, supporting and improving programs that enable adult learners to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education.

The Transition to College and Careers pilot project will build on the success of the ABE-to-College Transition Project.¹ While these programs equip adults with foundational academic and college success skills, they do not necessarily prepare adults to enter specific career tracks.

The Transition to College and Careers pilot project will help adult learners identify and pursue specific career plans, some in high growth health care occupations that have clear career pathways and pay family sustaining wages access.

Clear career goals can influence learner persistence:

- According to *Breaking Through: Helping Low-Skilled Adults Enter and Succeed in College and Careers*: “When students have the prospect of obtaining good, stable jobs, they often master basic math and science far more quickly.”²
- A study on student persistence by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) found that when adults have specific goals and when their progress, that is, steps taken towards their goals, is measured and acknowledged, they are more likely to persist in their pursuit of education.³

¹ For example, in program year 2007 64% of the students successfully completed the ABE-to-College Transition Project and 77% of the students who completed the Project have enrolled or will enroll in post-secondary education.

² Jobs for the Future

http://www.jff.org/Content/Current+Projects_Building+Economic+Opportunity+for+Adults_Breaking+Through.html

³ National Center for the Study of Adult Literacy and Learning <http://www.ncsall.net/?id=226>

In addition to influencing persistence, the “Tipping Point” research from the state of Washington shows that adults who attended college for at least one year (that is, earn a year’s worth of college credits) and completed a credential (e.g. career-related certification) earned more than those who earned fewer than 10 college credits. Furthermore, the study recommends that while short-term credentials are important for immediate employability and income gain, educational programs need to provide ample supports, advising, and clear career road maps to help students continue to make their way to and from and back again to educational opportunities in order to continue to advance their earnings overtime.⁴

III. DEFINITION OF CAREER PATHWAYS

Transition to College and Careers project will be developing and piloting a “career pathways” program model that is designed to help students with limited education enter and succeed in college-level occupational training programs that prepare them for in specific occupations in high-growth industries or fields that provide family sustaining wages.⁵

Key features of the model include:

- 1) basic skills instruction contextualized for a specific occupation or cluster of occupations within an industry or field;
- 2) curriculum, coursework and certifications that are broken into steps and that are aligned with and articulate to academic and career advancement;
- 3) support services, such as counseling, academic advising, and career coaching, etc.;
- 4) steps along career pathway that are diagrammed, e.g. career “transit” or “road” maps, developed by educators and employers; and
- 5) transition or “bridge” programs to help adults improve their basic skills and prepare for college-level courses, especially math, writing, communication courses.⁶

See the enclosed TCC Project Guidelines for the specific required features of the Transition to College and Careers program design.

IV. HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE NEEDS

The staffing shortages in nursing and allied health are acute across the New England region. High growth, high vacancy occupations in health care provide opportunities for career and wage advancement in all of the six New England states. However, the nursing and allied health positions in greatest demand require some postsecondary education (e.g. certificate, associate’s or bachelor’s degrees).

⁴ Community College Research Center <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=204>

⁵ National College Transition Network, *Transitioning Adults to College: Adult Basic Education Program Models* <http://www.collegetransition.org/planning/ncntransitionpaper.pdf>

⁶ Key features drawn from *Transitioning Adults to College: Adult Basic Education Program Models* and the Career Pathways How-To Guide, from the Workforce Strategy Center. For additional examples of features, see http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC_howto_10.16.06.pdf

Academic preparation for health careers is competitive and rigorous, and usually demands a solid foundation in college-level algebra, biology, and chemistry, making them challenging occupations for adult learners, whose academic preparation and persistence is already challenged by a variety of factors.

The specific local and regional health care workforce needs vary as does the type of workplace setting, e.g. long term care, ambulatory services, community health center, or hospital. The types of settings most prevalent in a given community will determine the types of positions that are in greatest demand (or projected demand). The types of academic programs available in local colleges also influence the specific career opportunities available and should address the area workforce needs.

It is important to note, however, that the primary emphasis of this pilot is on transitions to training that carries college credits. Therefore, while Certified Nursing Assistant training (CNA) may be a good entry point to the health care field for adults with lower level skills, it is not the goal of this project. Programs participating in this pilot project should be able to refer program applicants who are not ready for college transition level work to CNA training programs and/or appropriate ABE classes. In addition, people already working as CNA's should constitute part of the recruitment base for the Transition to College and Careers program.

V. CAREER-FOCUSED CURRICULUM FEATURES

A. Online Course for Transitions to Health Care

In addition to providing classroom based instruction and face-to-face counseling, programs will be introducing students to and supporting their progress with an online course that will be developed by NELRC, with input from programs selected for this pilot. The course will supplement the classroom based instruction and provide general academic and career development information tailored towards health careers, for example, introduction to health sciences, to the students in the program who choose to pursue health care careers.

This model of blending online and classroom instruction allows college transition programs to provide contextualized instruction to those learners who set the goal of entering health care programs. The model supports smaller communities where individual adult education centers are not likely to achieve a critical mass of learners for a specific career sector and can only do so through a collaborative model with other adult education centers. Online learning allows programs with limited resources to provide a career-specific contextualized curriculum.

Ultimately, if the model is successful, through the development of online contextualized college prep courses focused on various career pathways, programs can better help students within one transition program cycle/cohort prepare for a variety of career pathways.

B. Integrating Career Awareness and Planning

NELRC will also provide programs with the “Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom” curriculum guide for instructors and/or counselor to use a to help all students explore career interests and develop education and career plans. Presumably, it will be used more extensively with those students who have not selected a career path when they enter the program, to help them select an academic and career pathway to pursue.

VI. GRANT PROCESS, AWARD, AND ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for a grant, the lead organization must provide Adult Basic Education, ESOL, GED or Diploma classes as a primary educational service and also currently offer some program supports to help adult learners transition to college organizations and institutions in one of the six New England states – Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. Eligible organizations include public-purpose groups, such as schools and colleges, and nonprofit organizations that qualify under the Internal Revenue Service Code 501(c)(3).

The Foundation expects to award pilot grants to 6 partnerships that respond to this Request for Proposals (RFP). The initial grant is for up to \$10,000 for partnership and pathways development and programming planning during the period from August 15th - December 31st, 2008 (see the Transition to College and Careers Action Plan for specific planning deadlines).

Partnerships that complete their proposed planning activities will be eligible for an implementation grant of up to \$80,000 for the program year January 2009 - December 2009. Based on their performance, partnerships may be funded beyond the first year. Partnerships that are not selected through this initial RFP process may be considered for funding in future years.

Selected grantees must:

- participate in the professional development and planning activities of the Transitions to College and Careers Project.
- attend the National College Transition Network conference on Effective Transitions in Providence RI, November 17 & 18, 2008.
- agree to conduct required data collection and evaluation activities during the implementation phase.

Project Timeline At-A-Glance See TTCC Planning Document for more details			
May	June	July	August
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP Released early May • Informational telephone conferences for bidders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals due 5pm June 16th 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs Notified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching of planning phase • Bi-monthly phone conferences
September	October	November	December
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly phone conferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly phone conferences • Interim planning documents due • NELRC orients programs to supplementary instruction materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Transitions Conference, 11/17 and 11/18 • Bi-monthly phone conferences • NELRC orients programs to data collection forms • Program design and budget for January 09 implementation phase due 11/15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation, Instruction, and Counseling documents due 12/15

VII. THE ROLE OF THE NEW ENGLAND LITERACY RESOURCE CENTER

The New England Literacy Resource Center (NELRC) will assist the Foundation in selecting the successful grantees and act as an intermediary between the selected programs and the Foundation.

NELRC will:

- provide funded programs with technical assistance, training, and support for program planning and implementation throughout the grant period.
- develop the online course component for students pursuing health careers and orient program staff to the course.
- provide funded programs with copies of Integrating Career Awareness Curriculum Guide and training for instructors and counselors using it.
- provide funded programs with a copy of the National College Transition Network’s College Transition Toolkit. The toolkit provides guidance in developing and/or enhancing the program components, e.g. orientation, counseling, instruction, etc. described in the TTCC guidelines.
- convene and facilitate telephone conferences and face-to-face meetings with funded programs (the Transition to College and Careers “cluster”) to share experiences and approaches, learn from each other and identify common needs for technical assistance and program development.
- be responsible for collecting and compiling project data and monitoring partnership development and performance in meeting proposed objectives and outcomes.

VIII. CRITERIA FOR FUNDING

Preference will be given to proposals that:

- incorporate the features of the Transition to College and Careers Guidelines into partnership development, planning, and program design.
- demonstrate strong past performance in student outcomes: rates of student persistence; learning gains; level completions, GED graduates; and college placements.
- reflect experience and success providing services that support adult transitions to college.
- document the local/regional current and/or projected vacancies in health care field.
- document the local/regional education and skill levels of low-income adults (unemployed or underemployed) and those needed to enter and succeed in health career related training programs and occupations.
- describe an existing foundation of a collaboration with at least one postsecondary education partner with the potential to lead to institutionalized/long-term changes in practices to support adult learners transitioning to college and careers.
- describe coordinated activities that take place between the partnering college and key health care services employers, e.g., curriculum alignment, career advising, and career placement.
- in aggregate, represent the various geographic areas of New England.
- include a budget that reflects cost-effective, comprehensive transition services (see Project Guidelines).
- are complete and submitted on time.

IX. PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals should include responses to the following questions and be no more than ten pages in length (not including required forms and attachments), using a minimum of 12-point type except for footnotes.

Please include the following in your proposal:

1. Partnership

A. Partnership Composition

I. Lead Organization Capacity

- a) Complete the Proposal Cover Page

In addition, please provide an overview that describes:

- b) the community you serve, including demographics, and the number of students served per year;

- c) the scope of ABE/ESOL/ASE services you currently provide;
- d) any workforce development, career planning, or job skills training services that you currently provide;
- e) the college transition services and activities that you currently provide to adult learners;
- f) any counseling or support services that you currently provide to students in the ABE and/or transition programs;
- g) outcomes for 2007 and to date related to numbers of students enrolled in transition services, numbers completing, and numbers transitioning to postsecondary education; and
- h) successes and challenges your program has encountered in providing college transition services.

II. **Assessment of area needs and targeted career pathway(s)**

Please describe:

- a) the specific health care setting(s), occupations, career pathways, and employers that the project is intended to target and the current and projected workforce needs for this type of setting or set of occupations.
- b) the short and long term opportunities for employment and advancement, e.g., types of positions, and average wages.
- c) the short and long term educational programs leading to employment and advancement in the pathways you intend to target, including the types of degrees awarded, pre-requisites, and length of program.
- d) the availability of the targeted academic programs, e.g., number of students accepted annually, waiting lists, level of competition for slots.
- e) the local and/or regional data on the education and skill level of low-income adults (unemployed, underemployed, low-wage) in relation to the educational and skill level required to enter and succeed in health career related training programs and occupations and the unmet need your program will serve.
- f) Attach detailed schema (“road map”) outlining the steps towards training and advancement in the targeted health care pathway(s).⁷

B. Partnering Institutions and Roles

Please provide:

- a) the name(s) of the collaborating college (s) and the address of the college website.
- b) a description of the projected role of the collaborating college(s) in the program's design and implementation. Who is the point of contact from the college for this project and what

⁷ For examples of “road maps” see Worksource Oregon
http://www.worksourceoregon.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=90&Itemid=50

is their title? Who are the other key people from the college and what are their roles in the project?

- c) a description of your program's current and past coordinated activities and collaborations with the partnering college(s).
- d) the name(s) of the health care providers/employers that you intend to engage in this partnership and their current and proposed role in your partnership.
- e) a list of any other organizations participating in your partnership, e.g. adult education providers, career centers, human services, etc., and describe their role(s) in the project.

Please include:

- f) letters of commitment from deans of three key departments (e.g., financial aid, academic programs, student services) representing the college(s) in this partnership.
- g) letters from area ABE providers and social service agencies supporting this proposal and their commitment to assist in recruitment by referring people to your program.

2. Program Planning and Design

A. Planning Process

- a) See the Transition to College and Careers Program Guidelines for the required program design features.
- b) See the Transition to College and Careers Action Plan for the schedule of planning deliverables.
- c) Provide a preliminary timeline and brief description of planning activities for your partnership. Describe the sequence of activities and who will be involved for which pieces of the planning.

B. Schedule and Intensity of Services

- a) Refer to the Transition to College and Careers Guidelines
- b) Comment on your partnership's capacity to provide the level of services outlined in the Guidelines

C. Recruitment and Assessment

Please describe:

- a) your preliminary student recruitment plan and the organizations that will be involved in this effort.
- b) the instruments/tools you will consider using for initial assessment of students' knowledge, skills, career interests and aptitudes, including those related to health care professions.
- c) your process for researching and selecting tools.

D. Educational and Career Counseling/Support Services

Please describe:

- a) the preliminary design and approach of the educational counseling and career exploration component.
- b) your preliminary ideas about how the partnership will work together to support students once they transition to college.

E. Curriculum and Instruction

Please see the College Prep Curriculum Overview prior to completing this section

Please describe:

- a) how you will develop the core curriculum that you will use for face-to-face instruction.
- b) the instructional approaches the program will use.
- c) the computer and Internet facilities/services to which the staff and students will have access and the hours they are available.

F. Supplemental Instruction

Please describe:

- a) any online instructional or counseling tools you currently use with students.
- b) any supplementary instruction you offer now, e.g. tutoring, or open computer lab.
- c) preliminary ideas about how you will support students taking the online health services course.

G. Staffing and Professional Development

- a) Identify the staff positions and staff (to the extent possible) who will work on this project and describe their qualifications and experience. Attach their resumes.
- b) Describe how the agency director will support the development of the Transition to College and Careers partnership and program.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation of Target Outcomes

Please describe the processes you use for documenting and evaluating outcomes such as:

- d) student retention;
- e) student satisfaction;
- f) learning gains, and
- g) retention efforts.

4. Budget and Narrative

Please provide:

- a) an itemized budget (up to \$10,000) for the planning phase of the Transition to College and Career program and a budget narrative.
- b) a provisional itemized budget for implementing the Transition to College and Career program in calendar year 2009 (up to \$80,000). Although no match is required, your budget should reflect the true cost of the program and include expenses not covered by the grant that will be provided in kind or through other sources.
- c) the lead agency's organizational budget for FY 2009 including expenses and anticipated revenue.

5. Attachments

Applicants should provide the following attachments:

- a) Proposal Cover Page
- b) Budget and narrative for planning phase
- c) Provisional budget and narrative for program implementation
- d) A detailed schema ("road map") for the targeted career pathway(s)
- e) A copy of your IRS 501 (c)(3) letter attesting to your organization's tax-exempt, non-profit status
- f) A letter from the senior executive or chair of the board attesting to the organization's financial and operational support for this program
- g) Letters of commitment to collaborate from three departments in at least one local college
- h) Letters of agreement from other ABE and social service providers to refer students to your Transition to College and Careers program
- i) Resumes of key staff who will work on the project, where possible
- j) If you have not received a grant previously from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, please provide contact information of a funder (e.g. program officer) whom we can contact for a reference.

X. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

All proposals will be evaluated by a review team consisting of staff from the New England Literacy Resource Center and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

Proposals must be submitted electronically no later than 5:00 p.m. June 16, 2008 to:

TCC@worlded.org

You will receive an email within 2 business days confirming receipt. If you do not hear from us after 2 days, please contact Ben Bruno at 617-482-9485.

Awards will be announced and distributed in July 2008.

All applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in a phone conference to ask any questions they have about the project design, project goals and proposal process:

- Select one of the conference call sessions below.
- Register at least one week in advance.
- Submit your questions at least one day in advance of the call to best ensure that they are answered.
- To register and submit questions, write to TCC@worlded.org.
- You will receive information via email for accessing the conference call in advance of the call.
- The questions and answers from each teleconference will be posted on the NELRC website at www.nelrc.org

Phone call date	Phone call time	Deadline for registration
Tuesday 5/13/08	3:30-5pm	5/6/08
Wednesday 5/14/08	1pm-2:30	5/7/08
Thursday 5/15/08	9:30-11am	5/8/08
Tuesday 5/20/08	9:30-11am	5/13/08

About the Nellie Mae Education Foundation

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation's mission is to promote accessibility, quality and effectiveness of education from pre-school through postsecondary levels, for all ages, especially for under-served populations, in the six New England states. Through grantmaking, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation works with educational institutions and associations, and community organizations, foundations, government agencies and others to encourage, establish and maintain programs and services that promote education.

Opening Doors to Tomorrow

1250 Hancock Street, Suite 205N
Quincy, MA 02169 Tel. 781-348-4200
www.nmefdn.org

About the New England Literacy Resource Center

The mission of the New England Literacy Resource Center (NELRC) at World Education is to strengthen adult literacy services through collaborative efforts among State Literacy Resource Centers, adult literacy providers and policy-makers in New England. NELRC's work centers on four areas in which the need for project and professional development is great in the field of adult literacy: College Transitions, Civic Literacy, and Learner Persistence.

NELRC operates as part of World Education, Inc. whose mission is to improve the lives of the educationally disadvantaged through educational, economic and social development programs in the United States and abroad.

New England Literacy Resource Center/ World Education
44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210
Tel. 617-482-9485
Fax. 617-482-0617
www.nelrc.org