Frequently Asked Questions:

College in High School Alliance Customized State Support, Peer Learning Network & National Virtual Convening

This Frequently Asked Questions resource is a companion to the Request for Proposals issued by the College in High School Alliance (CHSA) for Customized State Support, a Peer Learning Network, and a National Virtual Convening. To access the Request for Proposals, click here.

1) **My state doesn't use any of these terms for these types of courses. Can my state still be considered?**

Yes. CHSA recognizes that many different names for these types of courses exist across states, and will consider all applications for participation regardless of the specific term used to refer to these types of courses or types of model represented in the state.

2) **Are you looking for a specific kind of state (eg. a state who already has a lot of existing policy for these programs)?**

No. We recognize that states' policies impacting college in high school programs, and the state's historic level of commitment to these programs, vary significantly. CHSA's team is capable of engaging with states at all levels of policy development for these programs - whether your state is very early in developing a policy architecture to support expanded access and student success, or has multiple policies already in place.

What we are looking for from the state is a commitment to progress in expanding equitable access to college in high school programs and student success, and a demonstration about why and how the circumstances to advance progress exist during the project period.

Specific support will be tailored by the team to suit the needs of each state's specific context and circumstances. For example, we might propose working with a state that has very little policy in place to support student access and success in these programs to look at how to build the foundation for equity-minded policies and strategies to achieve those ends.

Alternatively, for a state that already has an advanced policy architecture, we might work with that state to think about how to expand access and success for new populations of underrepresented students (e.g. students with disabilities) to complement the state's existing equity work.

3) **Do you use a framework for approaching policy to expand equity and quality for college in high school programs?**

Yes. In all of its engagement activities with state policymakers, CHSA uses the framework developed in [Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Equity and Quality in College in High School Programs](). The framework comprises six core components, and can be tailored to suit states at all levels of policy advancement through structuring existing state policies based on a three level advancement scale (Foundational, Advanced, Exceptional.)

The six core categories of the Unlocking Potential framework include:

- **Equity Goal and Public Reporting** - States set an equitable, statewide public goal for increasing the participation and success of traditionally underserved student groups in college in high school programs, with clear, disaggregated public reporting and accountability for progress toward the goal.
- **Program Integrity and Credit Transfer** - States support and promote high-quality college in high school programs through effective oversight and cross-sector collaboration between the K-12 and postsecondary sectors, as well as ensuring credit articulation.
- **Finance** - States design funding mechanisms that remove financial barriers for low-income and moderate-income students to participate and excel in college level work in high school.
- **Course Access and Availability** - States ensure that students are able to access college in high school courses, regardless of geography, with pathways that maximize opportunities for students to earn multiple college credits, and facilitate students exploring academic and career areas of interest while ensuring that those courses count toward high school graduation requirements.
- **Instructor Capacity** - States develop strategies to recruit, support, and diversify the pool of instructors with the qualifications to teach college in high school while encouraging collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary partners as college in high school programs are scaled.
- **Navigational Supports** - States prioritize the student navigational supports and advising needed to ensure student success in college in high school courses, particularly for those students historically underserved by these programs.

As a diverse network of collaborative national and state partners, the College in High School Alliance has the expertise available to work with states on any or all of these framework category areas, as well as in specific types of college in high school programs such as general studies and career-focused models or in a particular area of the field, such as program quality.

4) **What is the National Governors Association's role in this project?**

The National Governors Association (NGA) is a key partner and collaborator in the **National Virtual Convening** and is engaged in working with the CHSA to develop an engaging agenda of sessions and provide relevant content. NGA will also serve as a supporting partner for the **Customized State Support** and the **Peer Learning Network**, providing expertise on working with states on these projects and engaging with states where the governor's office is part of the participating team in the project.

5) **Can you tell me more about the <u>Customized State Support?</u>**

CHSA will assemble a team of experts from the partners in our collaborative to work with each of the selected states as part of the **Customized State Support** project. CHSA team leaders and supporting staff will be chosen to match the areas of priority that the state has outlined (for example, this could include Advance CTE staff if the state is particularly interested in CTE dual enrollment, or NACEP staff if the state is particularly interested in teacher credentialing.)

The CHSA team will then work with the state in three phases:

Phase One: Conducting a Needs Assessment (Estimated: July-August, 2021)

CHSA will work with the state to develop a needs assessment based on existing policies to determine areas of strength and weakness aligned to the <u>Unlocking Potential</u> framework. The needs assessment can be conducted privately for a participating state agency, or with the intention of publicizing it, whichever works best for the state involved. Please <u>see previous examples</u> or how we have used the Unlocking Potential framework to help specific states identify and address their needs.

States that have performed a recent comprehensive needs assessment exercise using the Unlocking Potential framework or one like it (either working directly with CHSA or a partner organization) may bypass this step and move directly into action planning.

Phase Two: Developing an Action Plan (Estimated: August-September, 2021)

Using the needs assessment, CHSA will work with the state to develop an action plan aligned to the needs assessment. The action plan will identify short, medium, and long-term activities, as well as different types of activities that should be undertaken, which may include but are not limited to regulatory action, legislation, context setting, partnership building, stakeholder engagement, and process changes. For examples of potential action steps that CHSA could work with the state on, see Question 6.

During Phase Three, CHSA will support implementation of the action plan over the remainder of the 12 month period through coaching, conducting research, providing expertise, facilitating connections and discussions with other state policymakers, and helping the state team improve their connections with stakeholders across the state. Potential activities outlined in the next question cover areas where CHSA can play a leading role on the state's behalf, but is not meant to be an exclusive list of ways CHSA can offer support.

During this period, the state team will meet regularly with the CHSA team (a minimum of once per month, and more as needed) to review progress against the action plan, identify next steps, and determine how the CHSA team can help support the state at each stage of the work.

6) **What kinds of activities can the College in High School Alliance support us with as part of the <u>Customized State Support</u>?**

We have developed the following sample list of activities that CHSA could help your state complete.

However, ***this is not an exhaustive or exclusive list***. We want to ensure that the action plans developed for each state reflect the state's specific needs. As a result, this list should be considered as a list of possible examples, and not the only activities that we can support you with.

Aligned to the <u>Unlocking Potential</u> framework described above, CHSA could work with a participating state on:

- **Equity Goal & Public Reporting**
  - **Developing an Equity Goal** - Helping the state develop an equity goal or a set of core principles around who the college in the high school programs in the state are designed to serve, aligned to existing state goals where applicable on statewide equity, attainment etc. for postsecondary access and success.
  - **Developing a Data Strategy** - Working with the state to develop a strategy for expanding data collection and reporting of college in high school program participation and success.
- **Program Integrity & Credit Transfer**
  - **Developing a Community of Practice** - Bringing together the lead state partners with other stakeholders to begin regular conversations about issues and the appropriate path forward.
  - **Designing a Convening** - Developing a space for collaboration between policymakers and practitioners on specific topics of interest.

- ○ **Developing Governance Solutions** - Working with the state to develop solutions to improve governance for college in high school programs, including promoting closer partnerships between K-12, higher education, and industry.
- **Finance**
  - ○ **Developing an Action Plan for Federal Funding** - Thinking through with the state how to deploy federal COVID-19 stimulus, braided with existing federal funding to support college in high school programs, and how to encourage K-12 and postsecondary partners in the state to do so also.
  - ○ **Perform a State & Local Funding Review** - Conducting a review of the ways in which programs fund their activities, how that funding is used, what gaps exist, and develop recommendations for ways to address those gaps to support equity of access.
- **Course Access and Availability**
  - ○ **Developing an Equity Plan** - Working with the state to develop a comprehensive plan of policy changes and solutions necessary to expand access for low income and underrepresented students, including both new policies and ways to prioritize equity of access and success within existing policies.
  - ○ **Expanding Access to Students with Disabilities** - Work with the state to develop a strategy to expand access to college in high school programs for students with disabilities.
- **Instructor Capacity**
  - ○ **Developing Credentialing Solutions** - Many states face challenges with teacher and postsecondary instructor credentialing and licensing to teach college classes in high school. Using best practices from other states, CHSA will work with the state to develop specific solutions to address the state's existing challenges for college in high school program instructors.
- **Navigational Supports**
  - ○ **Auditing Support Services** - Reviewing successful support services provided by program providers in the state, and developing recommendations for how to expand those services to more programs.

In addition, CHSA can support the state in more general activities around setting the context and improving the messaging environment for college in high school programs in the state:

- **Developing Explainer/Advocacy Materials** - Working with the state to develop better messaging around college in high school programs and the specific benefits to the state as well as to districts, schools, and students and families.
- **Developing an Understanding of Stakeholder Perspectives on College in High school Programs** - Helping the state get outside input, including running a statewide survey, on attitudes and opinions about college in high school programs in the state.

7) If selected for the <u>Customized State Support</u>, what can I use the $25,000 for?

Funding can be used for any activity that is linked to the needs assessment and the action plan to advance equity, quality, and access for college in high school programs in the state. This can include supporting staff time to advance the work, hiring a consultant with a scope of work aligned to the action plan, or advancing a specific project or initiative underway that serves the goals of the project.

8) Can you tell me more about the <u>Peer Learning Network</u>?

There is currently no consistent, ongoing forum for state policymakers to collaborate across states on issues related to college in high school programs. CHSA's **Peer Learning Network** will serve that function, providing a space within which policymakers can come together in a private forum to discuss their challenges, successes, and learnings.

The intent of the **Peer Learning Network**, which will meet monthly in a virtual setting, is to create an interactive forum that prioritizes as much sharing and collaboration among states as possible. CHSA's existing forums for these opportunities that also include practitioners (COVID-19 Working Group, Federal Policy Working Group, and Dual Enrollment Teacher Pipeline Working Group) are structured to generate as much interaction as possible, and not rely on dry presentations. We intend to bring the same approach to this network.

We plan to work with the members of the **Peer Learning Network** to develop an agenda that matches the challenges and questions that state policymakers are working to solve. Where possible, we will also look to engage [other organizations affiliated](#) with the College in High School Alliance who have a specific expertise or proposal that aligns with the needs of the network.

9) Can you tell me more about the <u>National Virtual Convening</u>?

The **National Virtual Convening** will launch the **Customized State Support** and **Peer Learning Network** projects through a focused agenda examining specific challenges in 2021, particularly in thinking about the role of college in high school programs in expanding student access to college and career success in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over three afternoon sessions (2:00 PM - 4:30 PM ET on June 29, June 30 & July 1), the workshop will explore three key topics:

- <u>June 29:</u> Assessing the role of college in high school programs in the recovery from COVID-19, and their role in improving outcomes for students in the status quo that exists post-pandemic.
- <u>June 30:</u> Setting intentional equity goals to support access to college in high school programs for low income students, students of color, students with disabilities, and other underrepresented students suffering the biggest impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

- <u>July 1:</u> Optimizing governance structures for college in high school programs - which were significantly tested by COVID-19 - and encouraging closer partnerships between K-12, higher education, and industry.

10) How does the <u>National Virtual Convening</u> differ from the one hosted in 2020?

This year's convening builds on the success of the [Cross-State Workshop](#) held in March 2020, but is not duplicative of the agenda or content from that convening. Whereas last year's convening provided a general introduction to the Unlocking Potential framework, the focus of the 2021 **National Virtual Convening** will be on the three specific themes outlined in the previous question - all of which are related to the role of college in high school programs in serving students following the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, using what we learned from the 2020 Cross-State Workshop (which was held virtually but originally planned as in person) and subsequent virtual events, the 2021 **National Virtual Convening** is being designed to optimize the virtual setting and the ability to include more participants as a result.

11) What are the application form questions?

For the Full State Support Package - Applicants for the Full State Support Package are asking to be considered for the Customized State Support, admission to the Peer Learning Network, and attendance at the National Virtual Convening.

- Applicant State & Lead Organization

- Identify other agencies or organizations in your state partnered in this project.

- Provide a brief description of the current state of college in high school programs in your state, to include types of programs offered, students served (disaggregated by student population, if available), and existing policies supportive of these programs. <u>(Limit 4,000 characters/approx. 500 words)</u>

- Provide a brief description of what the state hopes to gain from participating in this opportunity. <u>(Limit 4,000 characters/approx. 500 words)</u>

- Provide a brief description of existing work in the state to advance policy for college in high school programs to support equity, quality, and student success. <u>(Limit 4,000 characters/approx. 500 words)</u>

- Provide information about the team who will be participating in this project and how cross-sector collaboration will be encouraged or required. State teams are encouraged to provide names and titles of individuals that will be participating - however, states can also indicate what organizations will be represented if team members have not yet been

formally selected. If your state is seeking priority consideration, please indicate the governor's representative or attach the governor's support letter at the end of the application. (Limit 2,000 characters/approx. 250 words)

- Provide information on how the state will plan to engage representatives from historically underserved communities (e.g. including the state's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office) to ensure their perspectives are centered in the needs assessment and development of the action plan, if applicable. (Limit 2,000 characters/approx. 250 words)

- Provide a brief description about areas (eg. equity strategies, policy alignment, teacher credentialing, student supports, governance etc.) where you think you would most want support from CHSA's team of experts in advancing policy impacting college in high school programs in your state. (Limit 4,000 characters/approx. 500 words)

- Provide a brief description of how the state will plan to invest the $25,000 grant award.

- Information on the point of contact.

- An opportunity to upload a support letter from the governor to receive priority consideration.

For the State Networking Package - Applicants for the State Networking Package are asking to be considered for admission to the Peer Learning Network, and attendance at the National Virtual Convening. This package does NOT include consideration for the Customized State Support.

- Applicant State & Lead Organization

- Identify other agencies or organizations in your state partnered in this project.

- Provide a brief description of the current state of college in high school programs in your state, to include types of programs offered, students served (disaggregated by student population, if available), and existing policies supportive of these programs. (Limit 4,000 characters/approx. 500 words)

- Provide a brief description of what the state hopes to gain from participating in this opportunity. (Limit 4,000 characters/approx. 500 words)

- Provide a brief description of existing work in state to advance policy for college in high school programs to support equity, quality, and student success. (Limit 4,000 characters/approx. 500 words)

- Provide information about the team who will be participating in this project and how cross-sector collaboration will be encouraged or required. State teams are encouraged

to provide names and titles of individuals that will be participating - however, states can also indicate what organizations will be represented if team members have not yet been formally selected. If your state is seeking priority consideration, please indicate the governor's representative or attach the governor's support letter at the end of this application. (Limit 2,000 characters/approx. 250 words)

- Information on the point of contact.

- An opportunity to upload a support letter from the governor to receive priority consideration.