

Continuous Improvement Grant Application

Continuous Improvement Grants of up to \$25,000 are available to support, grow and promote the sustainability of community-based Local College Access Networks (LCANs) over the course of 12 months. As communities are ready for this grant, they are invited to apply by the Michigan College Access Network. Those LCANs that are invited to apply will have already implemented the collective impact framework. A staff member of the Michigan College Access Network must sign off on all applications prior to submission. Uninvited applications will not be considered. Continuous Improvement Grants will be accepted on a rolling basis.

GRANT GOALS

Implementing a collective impact framework is a continuous improvement process. While continuous improvement should be built into the framework throughout the process, it is natural to evaluate and determine next steps once a community has completed the recommended steps as described in **Charting the Course: A Community's Guide for Increasing Educational Attainment through the Lens of Collective Impact**, available online here: www.micollegeaccess.org/our-network/lcan-guidebook.

Continuous Improvement Grants will be provided with the goal of helping LCANs prepare communities to build sustainability, leverage local investment, grow the movement and strengthen collective impact within the LCAN. To do this, applicant LCANs will propose a Network Development Plan that addresses an identified area for improvement within the LCAN as associated with one of the five conditions of collective impact. **Applications that address low-income students, students of color and/or first-generation college going students are of particular interest.** These plans should be designed to enhance broader network development and programmatic functioning of the LCAN in one of the conditions of the collective impact framework in order to ensure the LCAN builds sustainably and can function more effectively. Network Development Plans should prioritize improving the broader functioning of the LCAN to build a stronger foundation rather than implementing specific projects that fall within a collective impact condition but do not necessarily help the LCAN function more generally. Example Network Development Plans that may be fundable with a Continuous Improvement Grant can be found below. Please note, these are only examples. The LCAN's Leadership Team should make strategic decisions about next steps for an LCAN within the collective impact framework.

- Expanding into new geography or school districts would require a revisiting of the **Common Agenda**. Ensuring the newly expanded area has appropriate representation on the Leadership Team and that relevant data for the new area is available and reviewed is critical to an expansion effort. This then forces the Common Agenda discussion to determine if anything must change due to that expansion.
- Purchasing or building a data management system may help to improve **Shared Measurement Systems**. Utilizing technology to strengthen your data collection and analysis helps the LCAN make better decisions, serve the members of the network better and seek outside funding and support.
- Creating alignment within a segment of related programs in a community is a good example of strengthening **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**. By focusing energy and resources to streamline, connect and align programs, an LCAN strengthens the network and improves access for students and parents.
- Building and designing methods to ensure **Continuous Communication** helps to build trust within the network and improve program alignment. This may include an LCAN newsletter that is regularly distributed to Leadership Team members, Action Team members and others within the network.

- As LCANs grow and evolve, additional staffing may be necessary. This could be accomplished through hiring employees, contracting with consultants or seeking trained volunteers. Strengthening the **Backbone Infrastructure** is essential in order to properly facilitate the collective impact framework within the community.

It may be helpful to identify plans that would **not** fit within the framework of this grant. To be clear, the concepts below are not necessarily wrong for LCANs; they merely are examples of plans that are not fundable through this grant.

- Placing college advisors in high school buildings.
- Developing or enhancing direct service programming, rather than developing or enhancing the network.
- Plans that won't ultimately increase degree/certificate attainment. (i.e. school to work, apprenticeships, licensure)
- Efforts outside MCAN's scope and/or mission.

It is highly recommended that applicants have a conversation with their primary contact on the MCAN staff to discuss the Network Development Plan prior to grant submission. As always, MCAN staff is available for a pre-review of a proposal prior to formal submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

MCAN staff is available to provide application assistance. Email Chris Rutherford, Director of Community Mobilization Strategy, at chris@micollegeaccess.org to request support.

GRANT AWARD

Continuous Improvement Grants are available up to \$25,000 with increasing match rates required for each grant an LCAN receives over time. Each Continuous Improvement Grant may not exceed a 12-month time period. All grantees will be required to match their grant funds in the following manner:

Continuous Improvement Year One Grantee	100% match required (\$25,000 grant/\$25,000 match)
Continuous Improvement Year Two Grantee	200% match required (\$25,000 grant/\$50,000 match)
Continuous Improvement Year Three Grantee	300% match required (\$25,000 grant/\$75,000 match)

Continuous Improvement Year Four Grants and beyond may be offered dependent on available grant funds. All match funds must be made in cash form, that is, no in-kind match funds will be allowed for this grant. LCANs are not required to apply for additional grants in immediate succession. For example, an LCAN may apply for a Continuous Improvement Year Two Grant months or years after closing out their Continuous Improvement Year One Grant. Part of the purpose of this grant program is to have funds available for LCANs into the future that can be accessed as able and appropriate.

For the purpose of this grant, all existing LCANs who are invited to apply for a Continuous Improvement Grant will be placed at the "Year One" level as of Fall 2013. Previously awarded Startup and/or Collective Impact Grants will not be taken into consideration when determining appropriate grant level.

DEFINING A LOCAL COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK

Local College Access Networks (LCANs) are community-based college access coordinating bodies supported by a team of community and education leaders representing K-12, higher education, nonprofit sector, government, business, and philanthropy. These intermediary organizations are committed to building a college-going culture and dramatically increasing the college going/completion rates within their community. LCANs coordinate and expand programs, services and resources that lower barriers preventing students from pursuing postsecondary educational opportunities. LCANs organize community leaders around a singular vision and goal: Increase the community's postsecondary educational attainment level to 60% by 2030 in order to lay the foundation for a vibrant economy, healthy community and strong workforce equipped to compete in a 21st century global economy. The LCAN will set goals focused on student success, establish a system of data gathering and analysis, report results and hold partners accountable for performance.

Continuous Improvement Grant – Application Components

PART 1 – APPLICATION COVER SHEET

Local College Access Network Name: _____

Community Served: _____

Address: _____

City: _____, MI Zip: _____

LCAN Coordinator/Contact Person: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

LCAN Coordinator/Contact Signature: _____ Date: _____

Anchor Name: _____ EIN: _____

Executive Director: _____ Email: _____

Direct Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Mailing address (if different from above): _____

City: _____, MI Zip: _____

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

(This application must be signed by the person authorized to accept external contracts and grants on behalf of the anchor organization. No application will be accepted without an authorized signature.)

MCAN Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____

(To ensure only those communities invited to apply actually submit applications, a staff member of the Michigan College Access Network must sign off on all applications prior to submission.)

Amount Requested: _____

Total LCAN Budget: _____

PART 2 – PROPOSAL CONTENT

Please provide the following:

1. Briefly describe the LCAN's major achievements or milestones to date. Use this space to demonstrate the tangible impact your LCAN has made. (i.e. data, trends, and specific examples)
2. How has the LCAN worked toward sustainability, including leveraging local investment?
3. How has the LCAN grown the college access movement within your community? Use this space to demonstrate the intangible impact your LCAN has made.
4. Alignment of existing organizations within the network to the common agenda, dashboard metrics, and to each other is a critical step in creating a strategic and coordinated network. What actions has the network taken to create alignment programmatically and to the common agenda? In your response, please give a specific example of a particular alignment success.
5. Please identify the condition of Collective Impact upon which your LCAN will focus your Network Development Plan. Please select one condition for your plan (the best fitting).
 - Common Agenda
 - Shared Measurement Systems
 - Mutually Reinforcing Activities
 - Continuous Communication
 - Backbone Support Infrastructure
6. Describe your proposed Network Development Plan and how it will help improve the Collective Impact area you identified within your LCAN. Be specific in your proposal about what area you plan to address and how your plan will specifically develop this area broadly in a sustainable manner so your LCAN can more effectively coordinate the College Access activities in your community. Please include as much information about your Network Development Plan as possible including a detailed summary of the specifics of your plan/how you plan to implement it/what goals it will specifically address/why there is a need for it. Be specific in your proposal about what aspects of your plan will *directly* improve the condition of Collective Impact you identified.
7. Please include a detailed proposed timeline of your Network Development Plan that does not exceed 12 months. The timeline should include detailed information and dates about the implementation of your Network Development Plan. Please attach this information as a separate document.
8. Please provide a copy of your most recently completed action plan for each action team. Please describe the process your LCAN used to build an action team(s), form an action plan and implement the projects. Were you successful? What is/are your action team(s) next steps?
9. Sustainability is critical to the long-term health of an LCAN and, in effect, its ability to reach Goal 2030. MCAN is committed to assisting LCANs in building a sustainable infrastructure. To that end, Continuous Improvement grantees will be required to host an MCAN sustainability site visit within 3 months of the beginning of the grant period. This site visit must include the LCAN Coordinator and the Leadership Team. Further, grantees should note that to continue to receive Continuous Improvement grants from MCAN over time, the required match funds will increase by 100% each year of application. For example, a Continuous Improvement grant in year 1 requires a \$25,000 cash match. A Continuous Improvement grant in year 2 requires a \$50,000 cash match (see page 2). Please share the LCAN's future plans for sustainability and affirm the Coordinator's and Leadership Team's understanding of the increased cash match over time and the requirement for a sustainability site visit within 3 months of the beginning of the grant period.
10. How can MCAN help support both your Network Development Plan and your sustainability plan? As with all MCAN grants, the Continuous Improvement grant is both support through financial resources and training and technical assistance resources.
11. As a funded grantee, you will be asked to participate in the statewide network created and facilitated by MCAN. This includes but is not limited to working with MCAN staff, participating in listserv discussions, sharing resources via the

network online resource library, attending LCAN meetings, and attending our annual conference. Please state your commitment to making all efforts to be an active participant in this statewide network and attend relevant events.

APPLICATIONS ONLY ACCEPTED ONLINE

PART 3 – LCAN BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

Please complete the following budget form for your LCAN. Please read page 2 for match requirements. All match funds must be made in cash form, that is, no in-kind match funds will be allowed for this grant. Matching contributions must be verified. For the purpose of this grant, the budget provided should be the LCAN’s budget, not solely the budget for the proposed plan.

	Requested Grant Funding	Matching Funds (Cash)	In-Kind Leveraged Funds (Not Match)	Plan Totals
Salaries				
Benefits				
Travel				
Equipment				
Materials & Supplies				
Contractual Services				
Other Direct Costs (See Budget Narrative)				
Indirect Costs (See Budget Narrative)				
TOTALS				

Budget Narrative: Use the following format to provide detailed budget information to support each line item in your budget for the implementation of the continuous improvement grant. Please show formulas to assist grant reviewers in understanding how your numbers were developed.

Salaries (key and support staff) – Name the individual(s) and/or their titles and provide the percent of time times their annual salary.

Benefits – Provide the total salaries subject to fringe benefits times the established rate (please indicate).

Travel – Break out costs by purpose of the travel (e.g. statewide meetings in Lansing, travel to partner locations, other relevant travel).

Equipment – Items costing more than \$5,000 per item are considered equipment.

Materials and Supplies – Includes expendable office, meeting and/or educational materials and supplies in support of the plan.

Contractual Services – Includes contracted professional services and any sub-awards to partner institutions or organizations necessary for the implementation of the grant.

Other Direct Costs – Includes services such as computer services/web support, space rental, meeting costs not included in the materials and supplies category, phone/fax/postage and printing.

Indirect Costs – Indirect costs represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant, contract, plan function or activity, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization. Indirect costs may include: rent, utilities, bookkeeping, IT support, etc. For the purposes of this grant, these costs may not exceed 10% of the total budget.

PART 4 – ATTACHMENTS

Please attach the following required documents.

- Updated Landscape Scan or Asset Map
- Signed Common Agenda
- Updated and Published Data Dashboard that clearly communicates trending information on Common Agenda metrics and when it was last updated
- List of Current Action Teams and their Members
- Verification of matching funds.
- Per Question #7: Detailed timeline of your plan for the Network Development Plan
- Per Question #8: Please provide a copy of your most recently-completed action plan for each Action Team.
- Current action plan for each action team (if available)*

*Not Required

PART 5 – PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proposals are only accepted using Michigan College Access Network's online grants system. You can find a link to the system, as well as updated application instructions here: <http://www.micollegeaccess.org/lcan/grants>.

1. Prior to writing and submitting your grant, please read the collective impact articles (John Kania and Mark Kramer):
 - a. "Collective Impact" – Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2011
www.ssireview.org/images/articles/2011_WI_Feature_Kania.pdf
 - b. "Channeling Change – Making Collective Impact Work" – Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2012
www.ssireview.org/pdf/Channeling_Change_PDF.pdf
 - c. "Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity" – Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2013
www.ssireview.org/pdf/Embracing_Emergence_PDF.pdf
2. MCAN staff is available to conduct a site visit prior to proposal submission. It is **highly** recommended to have an MCAN staff member pre-review this grant proposal prior to submission. Grants have a much higher likelihood of being funded if they have been pre-reviewed. Please contact your geographic contact on the MCAN staff for details.