



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

**FOR:**

**College Knowledge and Career Success Curriculum**



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## A. INTRODUCTION

The KIPP Foundation is requesting proposals from a proven K-12 curriculum creator to develop a robust, flexible, modular, interactive, competency-based 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> College Knowledge and Career Success (CKCS) curriculum, with an eye to increasing the rates at which KIPP alumni persist in and graduate from college or other upwardly mobile career credentialing programs.

Our aspiration is to field version one of the curriculum and programming with 8 pilot KIPP regions in the 2020-2021 academic year.

## B. KIPP FOUNDATION OVERVIEW

KIPP is a national network of free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public schools with a track record of preparing students in underserved communities for success in college and in life. There are currently over 220 KIPP schools, including 32 high schools, in 20 states and the District of Columbia serving nearly 100,000 KIPPsters. More than 87 percent of our students are from low-income families and eligible for the federal free or reduced-price meals program and 96 percent are African American or Latin-x. Nationally, close to 40% of KIPP alumni graduate from college within 6 years, more than triple the national average for similar students. While we are proud of these results, we work every day to do even better for and with our students, families and communities.

The KIPP Foundation is the national KIPP “parent” organization – the engine that: fuels the KIPP network’s expansion; delivers leadership development for founding, successor, and aspiring school leaders; oversees quality assurance; and fosters sharing and innovation across KIPP. The Foundation does not manage KIPP schools; KIPP is instead a decentralized network of schools and regions that each enter into a licensing agreement with the KIPP Foundation. ***This agreement ensures that there is a mutual commitment to, together with families and communities, create joyful, academically excellent schools that prepare students with the skills and confidence to pursue the paths they choose in college, career, and beyond so they can lead fulfilling lives and create a more just world.***

## C. THE PROBLEM WE ARE SEEKING TO SOLVE

KIPP is a college-preparatory school network. We believe, and research continues to show, that graduating from college is the most predictable way young people from low-income communities can achieve success. A college degree contributes to much higher likelihood of improvement in intergenerational economic mobility. For children born into the bottom quartile of family income, they are **three times more likely** to reach the top two quartiles, i.e. roughly the top 40% of income, in their lifetimes with a college degree as opposed to without.<sup>1</sup>

However, we have learned that where you go to college matters and not all college options are equal. When we relate average 6-year Black and Hispanic college graduation rates to Barron’s data on college selectivity, we see an over 40% swing in completion: around 40% of students who enroll go on to complete college at non-selective schools as compared to over 80% completion at the most competitive

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<sup>1</sup> “Getting Ahead or Losing Ground: Economic Mobility in America.” Brookings. Economic Mobility Project, an initiative of Pew Charitable Trusts



schools<sup>2</sup>. For complex, inter-dependent academic, financial and personal reasons, KIPPsters matriculate to colleges with a range of competitiveness, placing them at more or less risk of attaining a degree.

Additionally, some students do not matriculate to college at all and begin in the world of work. Students who enter college and do not achieve a diploma, especially if they incur debt, are often in a really difficult position. In a recent KIPP survey of 2,000 alumni, KIPPsters who stopped out of college reported lower levels of positivity on life satisfaction indicators (Career Progression, Financial Situation, Life Satisfaction and Happiness) than all other education levels. And students without any post-secondary education or training at all are at risk of never gaining entry into an upwardly mobile career.

Even for Black and Latin-x students who graduate from college, successful transition from college to career can be a challenging one. The unemployment rate for Black BA-degree graduates in 2015 was twice the rate of White graduates (12.9% vs. 23%).<sup>3</sup> As Aimée Eubanks Davis, founder and CEO of [Braven](#), states, “Certain invisible privileges often come to students from more affluent backgrounds—from parents who can help their children put together compelling resumes, to a sibling who’s gone through the interview process just a few years before, to a family friend who works at a thriving company and will make a connection. But for students without such privileges, these stepping-stones are absent and they’re left trying to jump a gap that other young folks quietly glide across.”

Currently in most KIPP high schools, the message students hear from adults (as confirmed through KIPP alumni feedback) is “college or bust”. The student experience is centered on achieving the best scholastic performance they can in order to earn admission to the best college they can. College entry by any means is often experienced as the “finish line”, instead of the means to the ends of a fulfilling life of financial independence and personal and professional success. We currently deliver high-quality college information, but we have an opportunity to build real college knowledge in our KIPPsters, contextualized in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace and connected to their own familial, financial, cultural and geographic dynamics. While our current student counseling and coaching work prepares KIPPsters well to have postsecondary options, our programming does not yet intentionally and strategically build in them the skills, habits, and knowledge necessary to persist in those pathways and, even more than that, to succeed professionally.

Our high schools do not yet uniformly have a focus on developing students’ passion and purpose to build a strong “why” for their pursuit of a college degree or post-secondary credential. Additionally, other very important skills, habits and knowledge necessary to persist in those pathways and succeed professionally are not as prominently incorporated into the high school experience as they could be. This somewhat singular focus on gaining admission without this additional skill-building and passion/purpose development is limiting KIPPsters’ chances to persist in their post-secondary pursuits and gain entry into upwardly mobile careers.

**To address these realities, we want to deepen how we engage students in college knowledge and career pursuit so they can fully leverage their K-12 education experience as a springboard to the careers of their highest aspiration, with a degree or credential as a key means to that end.**

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<sup>2</sup> Using data from National Center for Education Statistics and Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges

<sup>3</sup> Based on Economic Policy Institute analysis of Current Population Survey microdata, <https://www.epi.org/data/>



We are contemplating the most nuanced, forward-looking knowledge about the college and professional landscape that we can build in our students. This education is not new within KIPP, but could be more transformational. Additionally, we are developing a vision for a full continuum of career engagement, which will be new to KIPP.

***KIPP Career Continuum Vision (In Development)***

Education Phase	Career Integration Stage	Description	KIPP Foundation Provides
<b>High School</b>	Career exploration	KIPPsters explore their personal interests and skills and get to know the kinds of activities that make them excited and happy	-National modular curriculum and extension activities
	Career education	KIPPsters learn their <a href="#">Ikigai</a> *, or nexus of passion/purpose/plan, and the specific knowledge, skills and mindsets that are generally relevant for pre-professionals and specifically relevant based on various professions	-National modular curriculum and extension activities -Curated national partnerships
	Career experience	KIPPsters apply YouScience to their Ikigai to begin to educate themselves on careers that fulfill that charge and engage in applied opportunities to gauge career fit in real contexts	-National modular curriculum and extension activities -Program plans that schools can adopt for Spring Break or summer intensives -Curated national partnerships
<b>High School to Post-Secondary Transition</b>	Career-focused Match counseling, Enrollment in college or progressive professional pathway	KIPPsters build college wish lists and pursue admission and enrollment in colleges and universities and/or other education/training programs that will position them to succeed in focused career fields	-National modular curriculum and extension activities -Match process that includes career programs
<b>Post-Secondary Years</b>	Pre-occupational and pre-professional support	KIPPsters are coached to build knowledge and skills to compete in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century workforce (interviewing, negotiation, tech capacities, etc.) and to pursue pre-professional programs (internships, study abroad, apprenticeships, etc.) to prepare for their careers	-Advising program (effective, efficient for our practitioners and scalable for regions) -Curated national partnerships -Internships and jobs with KIPP

\*Could be this concept, the [Hedgehog concept](#), or another framework

**D. PROJECT SUMMARY**

As a first step towards operationalizing the career continuum, we want to implement a 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade College Knowledge and Career Success (CKCS) curriculum, with an eye to increasing the persistence and graduation rates of KIPP alumni from college or other upwardly mobile career credentialing programs.



In terms of **learning objectives**, ideally, this curriculum will:

1. Help students develop key socio-emotional<sup>4</sup> and critical-consciousness<sup>5</sup> competencies, such as self-advocacy, measured response to microaggressions, sense of belonging, relevance of school, proactive help-seeking, leveraging available supports and resources (academic support centers, professor office hours, mental health services) without fear of “imposter syndrome”<sup>6</sup>, etc.
2. Build students’ college knowledge around effective college pursuit, how GPA/ACT/course rigor impact academic profiles and college access, writing strong personal statements, etc.
3. Develop students’ pre-occupational<sup>7</sup> knowledge and skills, like resume-writing, interviewing, pursuing internships and apprenticeships, public speaking, etc.
4. Build students’ pre-professional knowledge and skills<sup>8</sup>, like financial literacy, career laddering, networking, building social capital, etc.
5. Suggest a scope and sequence and provide supplemental supports for implementing applied career experiences, including field trips, shadow days, internships, etc.

Additionally, the Foundation hopes to strengthen its external impact by offering a curriculum that can potentially be used by non-KIPP schools.

## E. DESIGN PARAMETERS

There are a number of design parameters that we would like you to address in your proposal submission. Please take full agency to elevate competing commitments, leaps of inference, hidden assumptions and any other challenges you perceive. Please also operate as if any tensions you surface will remain the same and assert how you would plan to achieve success “in spite and despite.” Additionally, please address as many approaches, i.e. your “how” to do the work, as possible, so that we learn how you are different from other potential partners. For example, if a parameter asserts “we hope the consultant will run a design process with our team to decide XYZ”, we would like to learn your approach to running decision-making design processes with clients.

### Parameters:

- We want the curriculum to be built on a prototype model with short-cycle publishing to our community for feedback and adjustment, as opposed to delivery of a full curriculum on a particular date. We are open to thinking with the consultant about delivering final content on a staggered timeline, or by essential elements first before other programming, etc., to enable this approach.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.turnaroundusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Turnaround-for-Children-Building-Blocks-for-Learningx-2.pdf> (one possible framework, final decision on framework TBD with consulting partner)

<sup>5</sup> KIPP articulation of critical consciousness: Achieving an in-depth understanding of the world (through rigorous academic discourse, experiential learning, life experiences and content mastery), allowing for the perception and exposure of social and political contradictions (oppression and injustices). Critical consciousness also includes taking action against the oppressive elements in one’s life (and the world around them) that are illuminated by that understanding.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-trajectory-race/201704/why-do-students-color-feel-imposter-in-school>

<sup>7</sup> KIPP articulation of pre-occupational: the specific set of knowledge and skills, agnostic to career discipline, that every KIPPster should master to apply for and enter a strong first job within their upwardly mobile career pathway

<sup>8</sup> KIPP articulation of pre-professional: knowledge, skills and mindsets to build upwardly mobile careers, within their disciplines, that facilitate a fulfilling life of financial independence and creation of a more just world.



- We are running a process internally to choose 1-2 nationally-adopted competency frameworks for career readiness. We would like our curriculum consultant to run us through a process to 1) prioritize the specific competencies the curriculum should drive to a “blueprint level” and 2) define realistic success levels within each competency. By blueprint-level, we mean the aspects of the national curriculum that we will expect regions to implement and that we will progress-monitor regions towards. Everything beyond that core programming will likely be implemented with excellence, but wide variation, across regions based on their own regional mission, mandates, funding, high school schedules and staffing, labor market and other realities. ***We must be exceedingly clear about blueprint-level core content vs. everything else.***
- We also want to define specific skills/mindsets related to critical consciousness and socio-emotional learning, as well as the specific pre-occupational and pre-professional knowledge, skills and mindsets that are highest-leverage to help our KIPPsters develop as “whole” young people positioned to navigate systems not built for them to attain their degree or credential, succeed professionally in careers of their highest aspiration and create a more just world.
- We want the curriculum consultant to curate, adopt, and adapt as much high-quality, vetted content already available as possible before developing content from scratch. We would like to work with the consultant to set out the criteria for “high-quality vetted content” and then whenever possible, we support the consultant intentionally stitching that content together and only cultivating original content when necessary to meet project goals.
- It will be important to contemplate what we can “own”, i.e. what is open source vs. any licensing challenges from including curricula/content branded by others and/or costs for regions to use others’ branded content.
- We want the consultant we work with to feel excited to implement a design process that leverages current innovations in college knowledge and career success from KIPP regions across the country.
- We want the curriculum to have student-facing content that KIPP staff people can view and grade/evaluate, which might include a capstone passion/purpose/plan product that would align to the curriculum and that could follow the student across the years of high school and into the post-secondary years.
- The curriculum must account for implementation with students who attend KIPP high schools and those who do not. KIPP operates 200+ K-8 schools, but only 32 high schools. In KIPP high schools, the KIPP school leadership is in control of how KIPPsters experience this curriculum. On the other hand, KIPP directors of college counseling must “chase” students in non-KIPP high schools to engage them in college and career counseling and the dynamic would be the same to get our non-KIPP-high-school students to engage in the CKCS curriculum.
- The curriculum must account for adults who facilitate the curriculum who may not be traditional teachers. In some schools, the curriculum may be delivered by staff who do not have a teaching background. There must be enough scripting and facilitation guidance to support non-teachers, understanding that more experienced teachers will use those resources less. We would like to collaborate to decide the appropriate suite of facilitator resources, e.g. internalization guides, curriculum resource companions, supports for culturally responsive teaching, etc.
- There are 30 hours per academic year in 11<sup>th</sup> grade and again in 12<sup>th</sup> grade in which to build the primary “blueprint-level” curriculum that all KIPP high schools will be expected to implement. Likely this implementation will be through a junior and a senior seminar course, but even when schools do not have the seminars, the expectation will be that all 30 hours are implemented within the structure of each respective school each year. This content should not be “threaded”, i.e. lesson two is dependent on completion of lesson one, but the content should be grouped and related in



ways that give a student a progressive learning experience (could be themes, could be by skill area to be developed, etc.)

- For 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, we want to build powerful extension content that could be implemented by schools with longer school years, those who have summer programming opportunities, those who have career integration as a focus of their school vision, etc.
- We would like to offer a to-be-determined set of blueprint-level content in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade years that can be integrated into other academic classes and/or offered in a “homeroom”-type class and/or as a summer experience. We would like the consultant to help us determine the highest-leverage competencies, knowledge and skills in these early grades that will position KIPPsters for the mission-critical 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades years.
- We want the curriculum to include programming support toolkits for career experiences, e.g. a session plan to guide students to prepare for, experience and internalize learnings from a corporate visit or a scope and sequence to run a 30-hour summer pre-occupational intensive or an approach to standing up and running a co-curricular career club, etc. We want to work with the consultant to decide on the highest-leverage set of offerings.
- We want the curriculum to be customizable by regions. We want the actual content to be built in accessible computer programs (not InDesign or something niche) and editable. This is an additional reason that standards and objectives are essential, so that as regions customize content for their context, they are clear on what each lesson or session or experience is supposed to achieve so there is still rigorous and similar learning across regions.
- We want the curriculum to be modular, i.e. not threaded; multi-modal, i.e. engaging different learning modalities; and multi-media, i.e. featuring video, reading media, etc.
- We want to have a hybrid curriculum with some content delivered digitally and some experienced at school, including student demonstrations of mastery of certain knowledge/skills, to accommodate regional differentiation and personalized learning opportunities.
- We want the curriculum to respond to the reality of language diversity, e.g. translated materials for blueprint-level, family-facing content, etc. We will collaborate with the curriculum consultant to make those critical choices.
- We want the curriculum to be as durably relevant and engaging to KIPPsters as possible, i.e. not so current-events-focused that it atrophies, but with content, approaches, examples, etc. that might best resonate with savvy high school students of color.
- We want the curriculum to be culturally responsive, i.e. with images, examples, activities, learning modalities, etc. that reflect the demography of KIPP – first-generation college students with rich, diverse ethnic/cultural histories who may be navigating dynamics of being from low-income families and/or communities.
- We want the curriculum to elevate students’ critical consciousness, specifically through the lens of racial justice, defined within KIPP as “...working to ensure equitable opportunities, outcomes and treatment for people of all races. Racial justice is a conscious act. Racial justice is an individual and institutional responsibility and a catalyst towards liberation.” This is encompassed by KIPP’s mission to, together with families and communities, create joyful, academically excellent schools that prepare students with the skills and confidence to pursue the paths they choose—college, career, and beyond— so they can lead fulfilling lives and *create a more just world*.
- We want the student-facing curricular content to be web-friendly with responsive design for web, especially for students who do not attend KIPP high schools and may be completing content on their phones, etc. We will host the curriculum digitally, but we want the consultant to know how to create web-friendly content (resizing pictures/videos, static web links that won’t disappear, etc.)



- We want the curriculum to be flexible, i.e. buildable as a program with the blueprint-level curriculum + modular components across lots of different contexts. We are comfortable with one region running the blueprint recommendation + the equivalent of 50 additional hours of programming in a “career center of excellence” high school AND a region with no KIPP high school pulling together a specific set of strategies with the hope of getting even half of their 11<sup>th</sup> grade alumni through the 30 hours of blueprint-level curriculum.

**F. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Effective proposals will meet the following criteria:

Student Impact

- Effective alignment of curriculum to the competencies around college knowledge, career readiness, critical consciousness, socio-emotional learning and pre-occupational and pre-professional skills articulated in this RFP.
- A strong approach to delivering a curriculum package, anchored in the blueprint-level core recommendation, whereby students achieve measurable proficiency across college and career knowledge, skills and mindsets (outputs).
- A strong case, with key leading performance indicators, around changed student behaviors as a result of successful curriculum implementation, e.g. participation in career experiences, students pursuing relevant major programs within college applications, college persistence and graduation rates, enrollment in and completion of upwardly mobile career credentialing programs, etc. (outcomes).

Feasibility of Use

Accounting for:

- Modularity, multi-modality, multi-media integration
- Hybrid curricular approach blending online personalized learning and facilitated content
- Language diversity
- Web-friendliness and responsive design for web
- Flexibility for regional customization

Capacity to Deliver

- Evidence that the team has the ability to design processes that yield decisions in order to deliver the curriculum on time and within budget
- Includes a work plan that can realistically be executed on time and within budget
- Balanced cost of the proposed engagement with potential value-add of the curriculum/programming
- A project team that has the skills and experience necessary for the proposed work and can work effectively across a highly matrixed organization with a commitment to inclusive collaboration with our regions

Proposal Scoring Rubric

Scoring Category	Points
<b>Student Impact</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Feasibility of Use</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Capacity to Deliver</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>



## G. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

<b>Submission</b>	Submit by December 13 <sup>th</sup> via email to <a href="mailto:ahelton@kipp.org">ahelton@kipp.org</a> and <a href="mailto:procurement@kipp.org">procurement@kipp.org</a> . Completed proposals due by 5:00pm Eastern Time.
<b>Selection Timeline</b>	By December 20 <sup>th</sup> : Proposals reviewed by Foundation review team and Career Collaborative leads Week of January 6 <sup>th</sup> : Finalist interview video calls January 10 <sup>th</sup> : Partner selected, all finalists informed
<b>Application</b>	Proposal Narrative (11 pages max) Simple budget outline Project team bios
<b>Requirements</b>	By submitting a proposal, applicants signify that they have read and understand this document and acknowledge that any information submitted on your behalf (including your proposal and any related documentation and communications) will be held as confidential within KIPP, but not subject to return.

## H. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

The Proposal Narrative questions and prompts below intend to help us understand your most current and deepest thinking about the project proposed.

**Organization (1 page or less).** Please tell us about the people and organization(s) that will develop the curriculum. Provide background about how long the organization has been in operation, its mission and any products that are already available. Please list the team members, specify the activities each person will be involved in and tell us why this team is uniquely positioned to achieve the aims of the project.

**Curriculum Description (6 pages or less).** Please describe the curriculum you aim to help us develop.

1. How would you propose to make the **decisions** needed for this project?
2. How will **instructional materials, activities and assessments** be aligned to the proposed learning objectives? Please include the following:
  - What **instructional materials** will be used? Please describe why you have chosen such materials.
  - What **activities** will learners engage in?
  - What **assessments** will be employed in the curriculum? What feedback will teachers and students receive based on these assessments, how, and how often?
3. How would you describe the **student experience** of your curriculum? Please include the following:
  - How will the curriculum be designed to enable **learner interaction and engagement**?
  - What **student scaffolds and supports** will be in place and how will they work?
4. How will you account for the design parameters of the project in order to achieve the project aims?



***Scoping and Pricing (1-2 pages)***

1. How do you propose to scope the project, given the design parameters outlined and desired results?
2. How will you price the project based on the scoping?
3. What interdependencies and sequencing do you anticipate in order to land the project?
4. What are your assumptions about timeline and resources required to complete the project?

***Work plan (1-2 pages).*** Please outline the major activities associated with the development of the curriculum, when they will be completed, and by what resources. The goal is to have the curriculum package ready for pilot regions to train on by the first week of July.

Additionally, applicants may provide up to five additional pages of appendices that elucidate your approaches to design and content, such as screenshots, sample lessons or assessments, etc. or other past work product. Finalists will be asked to provide two client references.