Invited Request for Partnership Application
Mobilizing Metro Areas and Regions to Increase Postsecondary Attainment

Lumina Community Partnership for Attainment

Lumina Foundation to support large-scale efforts to increase the number of individuals with postsecondary degrees and credentials in communities and regions across the US.

Dear:

In recognition and celebration of the effort and vision [org name], has extended to make postsecondary attainment a priority in your city, Lumina Foundation invites you to submit an application to participate in Lumina’s Community Partnership grant program.

The mission of Lumina Foundation is to expand access and success in education beyond high school, particularly among adults, first-generation college students, low-income students and students of color. This mission is directed toward reaching Goal 2025—to increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality postsecondary degrees and credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025. A key to reaching Goal 2025 is the mobilization of cities around the postsecondary attainment agenda.

Today more than ever, cities are key to the nation’s economic future. Two-thirds of Americans live in or near cities, and cities drive more than three-quarters of the nation’s economy. Why are some cities thriving while others struggle to hold onto population and industry? In a word, “talent.” According to Jim Clifton’s book, *The Coming Jobs War*: “Wherever the most talented people choose to migrate is where the next economic empires will rise. When the talented explorers of the new millennium choose your city, you attain the Holy Grail of global leadership—brain gain, talent gain, and subsequently, job creation.”

But finding that Holy Grail is a difficult quest. Talent gains do not just happen, and cities that leave their economic futures to chance—or give up, lamenting about brain drain—will continue their slow decline. Given demographic trends and increasing urbanization, our nation cannot meet its growing need for citizens with postsecondary credentials without meaningful community-based efforts. With that in mind, Lumina Foundation intends to expand the impact of community-based attainment efforts by granting targeted funding and a wide variety of complementary services to communities that are already working to increase higher education access and success.

Lumina is interested in working with your community because it has taken positive action to increase the level of postsecondary attainment and to ensure that [city] remains competitive, vibrant and a great place to live and work. This invitation-only partnership effort will support community-based, data-driven collaborations committed to increasing college attainment. This opportunity will provide grant support, technical assistance, communications support, network-development help and other forms of assistance—all design to increase the visibility and impact of your work.

I encourage you to consider this important opportunity.

Best Regards,

Jamie P. Merisotis
President and CEO
Lumina’s Mission and Goal
Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation committed to increasing the proportion of Americans who have high-quality, college-level learning. Our mission is defined by a specific goal: to increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality college degrees, certificates and credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina’s outcomes-based approach focuses on helping to design and build an accessible, responsive and accountable higher education system while fostering a national sense of urgency to achieve this goal, known as Goal 2025. For more information about Goal 2025, see our Strategic Plan, which is available on our website at http://www.luminafoundation.org/.

Rationale
Reaching Goal 2025 is a national imperative and will require concerted action on the part of many. We know that 65 percent of U.S. jobs – almost two-thirds – will require some form of postsecondary\(^1\) education by 2025 (A Decade Behind, Georgetown University on Education and the Workforce, 2012.) To reach an attainment rate of 60 percent by 2025, the nation must produce 62 million high-quality postsecondary credentials, including both college degrees (associate, bachelor’s, etc) and certificates that lead to further education or employment.

Cities, more now than ever, are the lynchpin in the US’s economic future. They are home to two-thirds (and growing) of the nation’s populations, and drive more than three-quarters of the nation’s economy. To ensure economic competitiveness and improve quality of life, cities must mobilize individuals and organizations in partnership. The various stakeholders—including civic and community groups, government, philanthropy and business—must take coordinated, data-driven approaches to achieve community talent goals. Lumina Foundation intends to partner with targeted communities to provide incentive grants along with a wide variety of complementary services and assistance to communities that are already taking steps to address higher education access and success issues.

Lumina Foundation is interested in working with cities that have a track record of positive action to increase the level of postsecondary attainment. We have developed the framework for an invitation-only partnership effort that will support community-based collaborations committed to increasing attainment. We seek to increase the impact of partnerships among policy, education, business, nonprofit and community organizations in metro areas, and help communities complete strategic work to increase attainment. This opportunity will blend grant support, technical assistance and thought partnership with national organizations experienced in community collaboration and higher education, a network for learning and sharing success, and communications support to increase the visibility and impact of your work.

Partnerships with Cities
There is no shortage of energy around postsecondary solutions, though relatively few communities have deeply embraced these solutions, and fewer still have organized to plan and implement them in an integrated fashion. Likewise, a growing number of organizations with experience in promoting higher education attainment and/or community transformation at the national level are working in communities – an excellent movement, but a limited and potentially chaotic one due to mission limitations and niches of those national organizations. It is clear that all communities are different and need the flexibility and opportunity to develop their own priorities and find leadership in different sectors – mayoral, business, education, etc. To maximize the probability of success and sustainability, Lumina will limit our partnerships to communities with a documented history of working collaboratively to achieve postsecondary attainment goals.

\(^1\) Postsecondary education refers to all education that occurs after high school or high school equivalent, including certificate and credential-bearing vocational education, associates degrees, bachelor’s degree and beyond. We use the terms “postsecondary” and “higher education” interchangeably.
To maximize the probability of success and sustainability, Lumina will leverage existing efforts. **Our role will be to strengthen and support the partnerships in communities that demonstrate the will, talent and leadership to engage in postsecondary credential and degree attainment planning and implementation.** We will connect to programs and organizations that are already gaining traction in promoting higher education attainment, creating multi-sector partnerships around attainment, and/or building leadership talent to advance a postsecondary agenda in their community. Our objectives in metro/regional communities will be the following:

- Develop sector\(^2\)-specific strategies for increasing postsecondary attainment.
- Secure partnership with communities to encourage a stronger emphasis on postsecondary preparation, access and success and to hasten impact and track results to credential and degree attainment.
- Highlight examples of collaborative models that work to increase credential and degree attainment at the community-level.
- Build a results driven network of engaged communities to strengthen targeted pilot efforts.
- Provide leadership and development opportunities for key community actors.
- Develop postsecondary success champions from many different sectors.

To qualify for partnership, several base criteria must be met:

- Community sets a specific numerical **goal for postsecondary attainment.**
- Community collaborative includes a signed goal statement from **at least three community organizations or entities that represent at least three different community sectors** (Government/policy/advocacy, education in K-12 and postsecondary, business/industry/economic development, community/faith-based and youth serving non-profit organizations and philanthropy/funders.).
- Community collaborative **identifies higher education strategies** that focus on one or more of the following target populations (can include Latinos, African-Americans and other underrepresented minority populations, returning adults, low-income adults, disconnected youth, students transitioning from high school to college); and one or more critical issues affecting or affected by postsecondary attainment: (such as economic development, business engagement, social justice, 2-year to 4-year alignment, college and K-12 collaboration, need-based vs. merit-based student aid, reverse transfer, developmental/remedial educational success, systems change.).
- Community collaborative commits to **report annually** on shared metrics.

To support community attainment, Lumina will provide highly-targeted financial support, convenings, networking and professional development opportunities, data access and analysis, communications support and technical assistance to all successful applicants. Additionally, Lumina will work to encourage the coordination of the efforts of affiliated national organizations that are working in communities. A number of these national organizations will serve as partnership coordinators, identifiers of communities with interest and commitment to postsecondary attainment, technical assistance providers and on-the-ground consultants. Through the partnerships, Lumina will recognize metro/regional areas with modest grant support as each community achieves self-identified strategic milestones, objectives and measurable higher education outcomes.

**Partnership Priorities:**

- Lumina is interested in partnering with **communities focused on postsecondary attainment.** While we recognize that early childhood efforts can reap benefits over the long-term, we are not able to partner with communities that have not demonstrated action on a postsecondary attainment agenda.

\(^2\) Examples of sectors include: Higher Education, public policy, business, non-profit, advocacy organizations, K-12, etc.
• Lumina is interested in partnering with established and growing multi-sector community efforts that are striving to significantly increase postsecondary attainment. The Foundation is not interested in funding start-up initiatives at the community level. Most successful partnerships will demonstrate their ability to influence direction in the community, hasten the impact and track student outcomes and results.

• We are looking to learn from the successes and challenges inherent in building collaboration, executing plans and achieving higher attainment outcomes. Successful partnerships are expected to develop sector-specific strategies for postsecondary attainment that can be shared with other communities.

• We are looking to support activities that drive organizations toward sustainability and relevance. Lumina grant funds will be modest, tied to identification and achievement of self-identified strategic outcomes.

• Lumina will support activities and organizations that promote increased alignment, and a common agenda among organizations working toward increasing attainment within a community. Community collaborations will be asked to map all existing related community efforts around postsecondary education attainment, to engage the other players in this work and to avoid duplication of services to target populations.

**Partnership Baseline Activities:**

Each selected community partnership (grantee site) will be expected to complete these activities as criteria for, and/or as an activity during the Partnership:

• **Criteria for Partnership**
  
  o **Identify the coordinating/backbone/anchor organization** for your metro/community/regional site. The entity should be a neutral partner with the authority to convene and execute a plan on behalf of the partnership.

  o **Set a postsecondary attainment goal** for the defined metro/community/regional area. Goal 2025 specifies an overall, national postsecondary attainment goal of 60 percent of the U.S. population between the ages of 25 and 64, but we recognize that each community will have a different baseline attainment rate and different educational needs. Each regional/community/metro site should use data to set a reasonable and obtainable goal by increasing the number of degrees awarded or by the percentage of adults with postsecondary attainment. Each site will set an individual goal based on specific demographic information.

  o **Specify area(s) of focus related to postsecondary attainment.** Sites should address the needs of one or more 21st century student populations, which include but are not limited to: working adults, low-income and first-generation students, returning veterans, displaced workers, students of color, part-time students, disconnected youth, high school to college transitional students and/or those with a wide range of other unique needs. Sites should address a local critical issue related to postsecondary attainment such as economic development, business engagement, achievement gaps, social justice and equity, two-year and four-year institution alignment, K-12 and college collaboration, need-based versus merit earned financial aid and/or developmental/remedial education, etc.

• **Partnership Activity**
  
  o **Share activities, lessons learned, opportunities and challenges** with metro/community/regional partners, national intermediaries, other grantee sites and Lumina staff. Through regular communication via webinars, conference calls, meetings site visits and other venues, national partners will work to support sites strategically with needed technical assistance, coordination of programs and knowledge/intelligence gathering on successful strategies for postsecondary completion and metro/community/regional collaboration.

  o **Map and identify current community infrastructure, initiatives/programs, organizations**
that relate to the stated postsecondary attainment goal. There is no shortage of energy around higher education solutions, but it is difficult to organize and implement successful strategies on the metro/community/regional level. Various community sectors (K-12, higher education institutions, community and faith-based, social service agencies, philanthropy, business, and civic organizations) address various components, often in isolation and duplication of others. Lumina will not create new community initiatives, but rather in will invest, support and strengthen existing programs that leverage resources and collaborate to serve 21\textsuperscript{st} century students. To that end, all sites will undertake a mapping and identification of the affiliated community efforts for collaboration.

- Community data will be collected on the indicators listed below.

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<tr>
<th>Summary of Indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>Postsecondary Readiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual high school dropout rate</td>
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<td>On-time high school graduation rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change in postsecondary enrollment by targeted population and/or targeted institution</td>
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- Identify strategies and tactics to deliver on community higher education goals. As described below, funding for the Partnership will be assessed for renewal annually, based on achievement of self-identified strategic milestones, objectives and higher education outcomes. Each community will be expected to deliver against its own objectives in order to secure follow-on funding. Examples of potential objectives include (but are certainly not limited to):

- **Financial aid**
  - Support increases in FAFSA applications and Pell awards through implementation of a FAFSA completion program for K-12 and adult students.
  - Expand opportunities for financial aid (e.g., creation of new programs such as “Promise” scholarship programs).
  - Support loan forgiveness and tuition assistance programs in high-need areas of the workforce.

- **Adult Learners**
  - Implement a program in your community that focuses on returning adults.
  - Build employer commitments to local partnerships, and target incumbent workers for degree completion.
  - Implement a program that locates individuals with some college and no degree and provides pathways toward degree completion.

- **Transfer and articulation**
  - Clearly communicate college-readiness standards across K-12, two-year
and four-year institutions, and implement curricular improvements that increase college readiness and success.

- Support targeted college advising/mentoring programs that actively involve students and their families in the college preparation and enrollment processes.
- Provide accurate and early college-going information, as well as targeted student support services.

  - **Developmental education**
    - Develop a local early-assessment program for high school juniors that identifies remedial needs, and uses the senior year to provide targeted instruction.
    - Share college placement assessments with high schools and create partnerships between high schools and colleges to help teens become college-ready.

**Funding Structure:**

Lumina Foundation will provide flexible funding that can cover a wide variety of expenses, with an aim toward supporting communities in meeting their postsecondary attainment goals in a way that best suits their needs. Therefore, Lumina will not be prescriptive about how grant dollars must be spent, though communities will operate inside a set of agreed-upon parameters, including:

- Grant dollars may not be used for scholarships, though they may be used to reform and improve existing scholarship programs.
- Grant dollars may not be used for any lobbying or political purpose.
- Grant dollars may only be used for sub-grants after explicit foundation approval.

Communities will be eligible to draw up to $200,000 over the course of the partnership, with annual allocations of:

- **$25,000 in 2013 for planning phase**
- **$75,000 in 2014**
- **$75,000 in 2015**
- **$25,000 in 2016**

Eligibility for additional dollars after 2014 will be tied to achievement of strategic objectives and outcomes (or significant progress toward achievement of those objectives, as judged by the Foundation) developed by the metro/community/region during the Planning Phase.

Besides grant funding, Lumina will provide additional funding to support attendance at Lumina convenings and other learning opportunities.

**Professional Development and Learning Network Opportunities:**

Partner communities will have a variety of opportunities to build their professional and peer networks over the course of the program, as well as to participate in learning activities aligned with community leadership work. Partner communities will also have the opportunity to work with Lumina and other national partners to suggest and help create activities and learning sessions that will contribute to their success.

Some of the learning opportunities available to communities selected under the Partnership will include:

- Training in data collection, metrics and analysis. Lumina’s evaluation team will provide instruction and guidance for communities on how to collect the metrics for the program.
- Opportunities to learn about Collective Impact and the Strive model.
- Training by the Harwood Institute to increase grass-roots collaboration and engagement.
- Training through the Columbus Community Education Coalition for communities looking to engage
the business sector in their work.

- Leveraging the National College Access Network (NCAN/CAN) and its members to provide higher education expertise, and connect with state and federal support.
- Providing assistance to communities seeking to implement program such as; Graduate! Network, Win-Win, Rutgers University Adult Learner program, Learningcounts.org, and others. These experts can provide insights in program implementation, troubleshooting, and ramping up.

Further, Lumina is committed to providing responsive services that become necessary over the course of the Partnership, including assistance with:
- Adult learners and prior learning assessment
- Collective impact and grassroots collaboration
- State policy impact
- Data collection and analysis
- Business engagement
- Postsecondary attainment strategies
- Cultural competency
- Outcome sustainability

**Partnership Structure and Timeline:**

Through 2016, Lumina seeks to build partnerships in support of work occurring in at least 75 communities. For management purposes, communities will be invited to apply for partnership in cohorts of 20-25, representing a wide variety of geographies, size, and approach.

Once a community effort has been selected for partnership, the planning phase and charter development process begins.

"Charter" – Lumina intends its community-driven work to focus on providing, to the extent possible, individualized support and flexibility for communities to set their own higher education priorities. As a result, we will be developing agreements with communities that articulate the responsibilities of both partners: Lumina and the city. The charter agreement will be a living document that identifies community priorities and approaches, as well as Lumina’s plan of support.

**Application and Selection Progress**

- Application for Partnership: Lumina Foundation issues invitation-only application for partnership to communities identified through the site-selection process.
- Application Completion: Communities will have approximately six weeks to complete the application in consultation with their local partners.
- Application Review: Once communities submit their applications for partnership, Lumina will review to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the application. However, Lumina reserves the right to deny an application where criteria for partnership are not met.
  - Communities will be selected for application based on the following criteria:
    - Strength of community postsecondary goal.
    - Identification of priority population(s) and higher education issues for focus.
    - Strength of the community collaboration, which must include at least three (3) different community sectors.
    - Strength of letters of support included with application.
- Selection Announcement: There will be a national announcement of selected communities, as well as communication from key national partners. Lumina will produce press releases for each community, and will be available for local media inquiries.

**Charter Development**
• Webinar on Engagement: Following the partnership announcement, Lumina will hold a webinar describing the “rules of engagement” and expectations for the planning period.
• Upon selection, communities will receive information key to prioritizing higher education approaches. The Brookings Institution will prepare an individualized data profile for each community, including data on attainment, labor market, economic growth trajectories, and other key workforce information. In addition the Strive Network will develop an assessment for communities, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their community partnership, and providing advice on ways to strengthen collaboration and impact.
• The Planning Period: Immediately after the partnership announcement, communities will receive a planning award of $25,000 to support the following activities:
  o Review of baseline information provided by Brookings and Strive Network.
  o Identification of a preliminary three year plan to increase postsecondary attainment, with articulation of:
    ▪ Concrete activities and strategic higher education outcomes (increased enrollment, persistence, and completion) to be completed in 2014, 2015 and 2016 that will increase postsecondary attainment.
    ▪ Preliminary annual budgets for the stated activities and objectives.
  o Creation of a preliminary plan for leveraging Lumina’s community support, including,
    ▪ Assistance communities need to support their objectives.
    ▪ Professional development opportunities needed to achieve short- and long-term objectives.
    ▪ Higher education and collaboration topics of the most interest to communities.
    ▪ During the planning period, communities will have access to a variety of national experts, who can provide technical assistance and advice as communities develop plans.
• Communities will prepare a charter proposal based on a template provided. This document will form the basis of the charter.

Charter Signature
• Based on the charter proposal, Lumina will develop agreements for each community to review. These agreements will reflect:
  o The community’s objectives and timeline, activities, and estimate of how Lumina funding will be used.
  o The results/measurement of success that the community and Lumina agree signifies achievement of postsecondary attainment outcomes.
  o The community’s initial learning and professional development plan, as well as an explanation of what Lumina intends to provide for field and capacity building over the course of the program.
  o A funding schedule for the term of the grant with explicit instructions for annual release of dollars.
  o Instructions for accessing technical assistance provided through the program, as well as consultant referral services
  o Schedule of major convenings and events expected over the course of the program, and
  o Instructions for submission of annual reports and data
• The charter will serve as the key grant agreement between Lumina and the community.

Evaluation:
Grantees will be required to participate in a broad evaluation to assess the national impact of this strategy and highlight communities achieving significant success. Communities may propose the use of an internal or external evaluator to address their local evaluation priorities through their Lumina funding.
The evaluation of Lumina’s Community Partnership for Attainment effort will be ongoing, and designed specifically to provide opportunities for course correction and improvement. Communities will be asked to reflect on their experiences and provide insights and opinions about how the Partnership can improve.

**Application Invitations**
This Application for Partnership is extended to *invited organizations only, and is not transferable*. The invitation to submit a proposal does not guarantee funding.

Additional instructions for the application are included in the enclosed Application Form. Applicants must follow the prescribed format.

**Submission**
A complete application, including all appendices, should be submitted *electronically* to communitypartnership@luminafoundation.org with the following title in the subject line: **Lumina Community Partnership Application**.

**Notifications**
Applicants will receive electronic confirmation of receipt of all proposals. Selection decisions will be notified by November 1, 2013. Lumina Foundation will inform all applicants of the Foundation’s final decision.

**Program Information Webinar**
All invited organizations are encouraged to participate in the Lumina Community Partnership - Grant Information Webinar scheduled for **1:00-2:00 p.m. (EDT) August 27, 2013**. During the webinar, Lumina Foundation staff will provide detailed information about the application process, budget parameters, and answer questions. An Outlook appointment with WebEx and dial-in information will be sent to the Application recipient one week in advance of the webinar.

Those unable to participate in the Webinar may access an audio recording of the Webinar within 48 hours.

**Key Dates**

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<tr>
<td>Application Issue Date</td>
<td>August 14, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Information Webinar</td>
<td>August 27, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Due (electronically)</td>
<td>September 20, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notification of Application Status</td>
<td>October 25, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnership Announcement</td>
<td>November 1, 2013</td>
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<td>Planning Grant Awarded</td>
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<td>Charter Development Webinar</td>
<td>November 11, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnership Convening (Indianapolis)</td>
<td>December 3-4, 2013</td>
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<td>Charter Proposals Due (electronically)</td>
<td>January 6, 2014</td>
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<td>Charter Proposal Review</td>
<td>January 6 – January 24, 2014</td>
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<td>Charter Signature Due</td>
<td>February 6, 2014</td>
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<td>Implementation Grant Awarded upon signature of the charter</td>
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**Contact Information for Questions**
All questions must be submitted via e-mail to communitypartnership@luminafoundation.org.

Questions submitted in writing 48 hours prior to the Application Information Webinar (on August 27, 2013)
will be answered during the Webinar.

Questions submitted in writing after the Application Webinar will be collected, answered in writing, and distributed via email within one week.