

Illinois Postsecondary Wraparound Supports Initiative



Evidence-driven supports. Better outcomes. More completions.

The Illinois Postsecondary Wraparound Supports Initiative supports postsecondary institutions in strengthening, expanding, or launching wraparound support programs that address barriers to student persistence and completion. Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), eligible 2- and 4-year, public and private, not-for-profit institutions located in (or with a campus in) Chicago and Lake County are invited to propose wraparound support programs that address barriers to student persistence and completion, promote equitable outcomes, and use data and evidence to inform continuous improvement.

Selected institutions will receive grant funding to evaluate, strengthen, expand, or launch wraparound supports and participate in a cohort-based professional learning community facilitated by the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®). Grantees will also receive individualized coaching and technical assistance from AIR.

The initiative aims to strengthen institutional capacity to deliver effective, student-centered wraparound supports, while contributing to shared learning and informing future regional strategies to improve postsecondary persistence, completion, and equity.

About the Illinois Postsecondary Student Wraparound Supports Initiative

Students invest significant time, effort, and resources in pursuing postsecondary education, often while balancing work, family, and financial responsibilities. Although colleges and universities are actively working to better serve students through a range of supports and initiatives, institutional systems and structures are not always designed to help students persist through completion.

In addition, structural and systemic barriers disproportionately affect students from marginalized backgrounds, widening inequities in college access and completion (Coca et al., 2023; The Hope Center, 2025; Martin & Flores, 2023; Walker, 2016).

As a result, too many students—especially those furthest

What Are Wraparound Supports?

Wraparound supports are coordinated services and connections designed to address the range of barriers students may face in completing their education. These supports may include the following:

- Support for basic needs (e.g., food, housing, transportation)
- Targeted financial assistance (e.g., emergency aid, completion grants)
- Academic coaching and supports (e.g., tutoring, co-requisite support)
- Holistic coaching and support that help students persist and complete (e.g., success coaching; mental and physical health support)
- Career development and job placement support

from opportunity, such as first-generation students, students from low-income backgrounds, and students of color—leave college without earning a degree or credential, limiting the full economic and social benefits of postsecondary education for students, families, and communities.

Research shows that college completion depends on more than academic preparation. Basic needs, academic challenges, and institutional barriers compound one another (Center for Equitable Higher Education, 2023; The Institute for College Access & Success, 2021), and many students do not use available supports because of limited awareness, stigma, or system complexity (Daugherty et al., 2020; Walsh et al., 2024). At the same time, supports are often siloed and difficult to navigate, and many approaches focus primarily on academic needs while overlooking broader ecological and structural barriers (Center for Equitable Higher Education, 2023; Perez & Kezar, 2025).

Students are more likely to complete their programs when institutions provide coordinated wraparound supports that respond to their needs, acknowledge their lived experiences, and build on the strengths they bring as they work toward a degree or credential. ***Still, there is limited shared understanding of which approaches are most effective, for whom, under which conditions, and at what cost.***

This initiative addresses these gaps by supporting postsecondary institutions—which play a central role in advancing student completion—to evaluate, strengthen, expand, or launch wraparound support programs that align with institutional and state student success goals. Ultimately, these efforts will play an important role in improving persistence, completion, and equitable postsecondary outcomes across Illinois.

Grant Overview

Through this grant initiative, selected postsecondary institutions located in Chicago and Lake County will receive funding to evaluate, strengthen, expand, or launch wraparound support programs that address barriers to student persistence and completion. Grant funds may be used to support activities such as the following:

- Piloting or scaling evidence-informed approaches
- Strengthening coordination across academic and nonacademic supports
- Evaluating existing wraparound support models
- Building institutional capacity to use data for continuous improvement

Funded institutions should prioritize supporting students in Chicago and Lake County who face structural barriers to success, and should actively incorporate student perspectives into the design, implementation, and evaluation of wraparound supports.

In addition to grant funding, participating institutions will receive structured technical assistance and support throughout the grant period. This includes engagement in a cohort-based professional learning community facilitated by AIR; opportunities to collaborate and share best practices with peers across Chicago and Lake County; tailored coaching; and expert guidance on program design, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

The expected outcomes of this initiative are both institutional and field-facing, as shown in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. Institutional and Regional Outcomes

Institution-Level Outcomes	Regional Outcomes
Strengthen capacity to deliver coordinated, student-centered wraparound supports that are aligned with institutional priorities and responsive to local student needs. Center student voice, especially from those furthest from opportunity, in strengthening, expanding, or developing new wraparound supports. Generate actionable insights and evidence through evaluation about which supports are most effective for which students and under what conditions.	Contribute to shared learning across postsecondary institutions in Chicago and Lake County. Inform future investments and strategies aimed at improving postsecondary persistence, completion, and equitable outcomes across the region.

Specific Request for This RFP

Proposals must clearly describe the wraparound support program that will be the focus of the grant, including the student population(s) the program is intended to serve, the barriers the program seeks to address, the strategies and activities that will be implemented or examined, and how those strategies and activities will support students furthest from opportunity. All proposals must intentionally center student voice in the design, implementation, and/or evaluation of the proposed supports.

Applicants must also demonstrate a commitment to participating fully in grant-supported learning and improvement activities, including engagement in a cohort-based professional learning community and technical assistance facilitated by AIR. Proposals should reflect a willingness to use quantitative and/or qualitative data (e.g., data from surveys, interviews, focus groups; administrative or programmatic data) to inform continuous improvement and to share insights about implementation, challenges, and outcomes with participating institutions.

Successful proposals will demonstrate clarity of purpose, feasibility, and alignment with the goal of strengthening wraparound supports to improve student persistence and completion for those furthest from opportunity. Proposals should clearly articulate how grant funds and technical support will be used to advance the proposed work, how progress and outcomes will be evaluated, and how lessons learned may inform other student success efforts.

Eligibility and Proposal Requirements

Eligible Institutions

To be eligible, institutions must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a **public or private, not-for-profit, degree-granting postsecondary institution** (2- or 4-year institution)
- Must be **located and serving students in Chicago or Lake County, Illinois**, including institutions with a physical campus in either region
- Must have undergraduate enrollment, at least **20% of whom are Pell Grant recipients**
- Must enroll **at least 500 undergraduate students**

By submitting an application, you are confirming that your institution meets these criteria.

Institutions that are participating in Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) initiatives—such as IBHE equity plans and communities of practice, the Chicago Public Schools Promising Practice Innovation Fund, and the IBHE SUCCESS initiative—are especially encouraged to apply. Proposed projects may build on, extend, or complement existing plans and programs developed through these initiatives, rather than duplicating prior efforts.

Institutional Scope and Focus

Successful applicants will do the following:

- Propose a project focused on **strengthening, expanding, or launching a wraparound support program**.
- **Serve students furthest from opportunity**, including first-generation students, students from low-income backgrounds, and students of color.
- Demonstrate alignment between the proposed work and **institutional student success priorities**, especially for students furthest from opportunity.
- Use **quantitative and/or qualitative data that center student voice** to inform continuous improvement.
- Include a **sustainability plan** beyond the life of the grant.

Participation and Capacity Requirements

Proposals should demonstrate institutional capacity and readiness to accomplish the following:

- **Center student voice** in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed wraparound supports.
- Participate fully in **grant-supported technical assistance**, including engaging in a cohort-based professional learning community, peer learning activities, and individualized coaching facilitated by AIR.
- Identify the appropriate **institutional staff** responsible for program implementation, participation in grant activities, and coordination with AIR.
- Collect and analyze data, and use evidence to guide practice, continuous improvement, and early outcomes.

Other Grant Considerations

- **Who may serve as project lead and staff.** The proposed project lead must be employed at the postsecondary institution submitting the grant. The proposed lead and other project staff should include those who (a) work closely with the wraparound support program(s); and/or (b) serve in an advisory capacity regarding program evaluation and implementation, and have demonstrated experience working with wraparound supports and/or students who are furthest from opportunity in postsecondary education.
- **Limit on the number of proposals per organization.** For institutions or systems with multiple campuses, each campus may submit no more than one proposal. Institutions with only one campus are limited to one proposal submission for this RFP.
- **Limit on the number of proposals per project lead or co-project lead.** An individual may serve as project lead or co-project lead on no more than one proposal submitted for this RFP.
- **Subawards.** Applicants may propose to include a subaward to an external partner (such as a community-based organization) to support the proposed project. However, the postsecondary institution must be the lead organization on the proposal and the primary participant in the professional learning community. Proposals that include subawards must provide a clear justification for the partnership and specifically address how they will sustain the proposed work after the grant period ends.
- **Award information:** Standard grant.
- **Period of performance:** March 2027–February 2030.

- **Project budget:** Projects may request up to a total of \$250,000 per grant year, for a maximum total of \$750,000, to cover direct and indirect costs over the grant period.
 - **Direct costs** are the costs involved in delivering project services. Examples of direct project expenses include personnel, salaries, fringe benefits, travel, supplies and materials, trainings, meetings, and consultants.
 - For this project, proposal teams must include costs associated with participating in the following events for two team members (one project lead and one team member):
 - » Travel to and attendance at half-day, in-person professional learning community sessions in Chicago, Illinois (two per grant year, six in total; dates and location to be determined [TBD])
 - » Participation in virtual professional learning community sessions (two per grant year, six in total; specific dates TBD)
 - » Participation in multiple one-to-one virtual coaching meetings throughout the grant period (a total of two to four meetings)
 - **Indirect costs** are organizational costs that are not directly tied to the project budget but that are required to support general organizational operations. Examples include executive and support staff salaries (e.g., human resources, accounting, information technology staff, etc.); organizational equipment and technology; rent; and utilities. Indirect costs on direct expenses are allowed but should not exceed 15%.

Grantee Commitment and Expectations

During the grant period, grantees will be expected to commit to and engage in the activities presented in Exhibit 2. Project budgets will need to consider and account for the direct costs associated with the activities and events described.

Exhibit 2. Detailed Summary of Grantee Activities and Commitments

Activity/event	Expected time commitment	Description
Full-cohort professional learning community (PLC) sessions	Virtual: 90 minutes, twice per year In person: half-day, twice per year	PLC sessions with the full grantee cohort, facilitated by AIR, will support shared learning, reflection, and continuous improvement, with a focus on evaluation and learning. Session topics will be informed by grantees' projects, priorities, and emerging needs over the course of the grant. Sessions will include opportunities for structured peer engagement, discussion of emerging lessons and promising practices from grantees' projects, and guidance from subject matter experts that grantees can apply within their own institutional contexts.

Activity/event	Expected time commitment	Description
One-to-one virtual coaching meetings with AIR coach	60 minutes, two to four sessions (as needed)	One-to-one coaching meetings will provide grantees with direct, tailored support for evaluation and continuous improvement. Meeting content will be developed in collaboration with grantees and refined on an ongoing basis according to evolving needs.
Data collection and evaluation	As applicable between scheduled meetings	Grantees will be expected to collect and use quantitative and/or qualitative data—including data collected from students—to examine the implementation and outcomes of their proposed wraparound support program. AIR will provide ongoing support to grantees for data collection and evaluation through PLC sessions and one-to-one coaching. Grantees will not be required to share data with AIR.
Interim work on own	As applicable between scheduled meetings	Grantees will be expected to make progress with their programs by completing interim work independently between PLC and coaching sessions, as applicable.
Provide and receive grantee peer feedback	Ongoing	Peer feedback during scheduled PLC meetings (or ad hoc conversations) will provide ongoing opportunities for grantees to learn from each other and receive valuable feedback from those who are doing similar work.

Grant Reporting Expectations

Grantees will be expected to complete and submit an interim grant report to AIR at the end of each funding year to highlight successes, elevate challenges, and share status updates on project activities. Grantees will also be required to submit a final grant report and financial report to AIR at the conclusion of the grant period.

Additionally, grantees will be expected to produce two formal products during the grant period:

- A report that summarizes evaluation activities and findings, and elevates the perspectives and experiences of students, to build evidence on the grantee’s wraparound support(s)
- A dissemination plan for sharing findings from evaluation activities with the field, with the goal of motivating other institutions to expand wraparound supports

Grantees will receive support from AIR and AIR’s communications specialists in executing their dissemination activities in the final year of the grant.

All deliverables that are produced by grantees will be freely and openly available to promote capacity building among other postsecondary institutions, with appropriate author attribution/citation for originally developed materials. Further, when relevant, grant work products may be licensed under a Creative Commons or other similar licensing scheme to support public accessibility and widespread distribution.

Informational Webinar

AIR will host an informational webinar about this RFP on **October 7, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. Central Time**. To register for the webinar, [click here](#). A recording of the webinar will be posted online at <https://www.air.org/project/illinois-postsecondary-wraparound-supports-initiative>, along with an updated frequently asked questions (FAQs) document to account for and address any questions raised during the webinar.

RFP Process and Award Timeline

Exhibit 3 presents the timeline for the RFP and award process. Please note that AIR reserves the right to modify the timeline to accommodate the appropriate review and full consideration of all submissions. Applicants will be notified of any modifications to the timeline.

Questions about the funding opportunity may be directed to PostsecondarySupports@air.org. Questions submitted prior to the September 30, 2026, deadline will be addressed in the informational webinar; however, applicants are welcome to submit questions throughout the application period. The FAQ document will be updated regularly.

Exhibit 3. RFP Process and Award Timeline

Milestone/activity	Date
RFP released	August 25, 2026
Deadline for questions	September 30, 2026
Informational webinar for prospective grantees	October 7, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. Central Time
Proposals due	November 10, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. Central Time
Award decisions made and proposal teams notified	February 24, 2027
Grants awarded	Approximately 30 days following award notifications; exact timeline will depend on institutional review of grant agreements

Proposal Submission Guidelines

Interested institutions should respond to the following prompts in a narrative of up to 10 single-spaced pages, not including references. To submit your application, please [click here](#) to access the submission form. You will be asked to provide some basic details about your institution and application and upload your proposal narrative in PDF format.

Program Overview and Rationale

Describe the wraparound support program that is the focus of the proposal, including the program’s goals, the student population(s) it is intended to serve, and the specific barriers to persistence and completion that the program seeks to address. Provide a clear rationale for the proposed work,

grounded in institutional context, student needs, and relevant evidence or promising practices. Articulate how the proposed project aligns with broader institutional priorities for equity and student success.

Program Design and Implementation

Describe the strategies, activities, and structures that will be implemented, strengthened, expanded, or evaluated through the grant. Explain how the proposed approach is feasible within the grant period and appropriately scoped to institutional capacity. Include plans for communication across departments and units that will be affected by or contribute to the project, and with institutional leaders in related decision-making roles. If building on an existing program, describe the current model and how grant funds will be used to improve or extend it.

Centering Student Voice

Describe how student voice will be intentionally incorporated into the design, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed wraparound support program. Explain whose perspectives will be included, how input will be gathered, and how student feedback will inform decision-making over the course of the grant.

Anticipated Outcomes and Sustainability

Describe the anticipated outcomes of the proposed work for students and the institution. Explain how successful practices may be sustained or institutionalized beyond the grant period and how the work may inform broader student success efforts. Describe plans to build long-term institutional support for the proposed work, including the engagement of institutional leaders and other decision makers who can influence future policy, practice, and resource allocation. Discuss how the project will contribute to broader institutional culture change related to student success and wraparound supports. Identify any funding streams, partnerships, staffing, or other resources that could support sustainability beyond the grant period. Describe how lessons learned from the project will be applied to future student success efforts and address plans for maintaining project continuity in the event of leadership or staff turnover.

Anticipated Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Describe the key risks, challenges, or barriers that could affect successful implementation of the proposed project and how the project team plans to address them. Risks may include (but are not limited to) student engagement and participation, staffing capacity, or cross-departmental coordination challenges; problems accessing the data needed for evaluation; lengthy or complicated institutional approval processes; difficult implementation timelines; or competing institutional priorities. Explain the specific strategies that will be used to mitigate these challenges during the grant period and maintain progress toward project goals. Applicants may also identify areas where technical assistance, coaching, or peer learning through the grant could help strengthen implementation.

Evidence Use, Data Capacity, and Evaluation Approach

Describe the quantitative and/or qualitative data that will be used to assess progress and evaluate outcomes. Explain how data will be collected, analyzed, and used for continuous improvement, with evaluation expectations aligned with institutional capacity. Proposals may include nonacademic outcomes that could be collected through surveys or focus groups/interviews (e.g., belonging, engagement) where appropriate. Identify key student outcome metrics you plan to track that align with the proposed project and are feasible to measure within the grant period. In addition to longer term outcomes, leading indicators of progress are important to consider and may be especially appropriate for projects intended to influence outcomes that may not be measured within the grant period (e.g., graduation, credential attainment). Describe how, if applicable, the project team will partner with institutional research staff to collect relevant administrative data.

Institutional Capacity and Staffing

Describe the roles (including the project lead and team member who will participate in grant activities), experience, and responsibilities of key staff involved in the proposed work. Explain how the project team is positioned to implement the project successfully, including any cross-departmental collaboration or partnerships that support student success. Identify any gaps in capacity and how they will be addressed.

Participation in Professional Learning and Technical Assistance

Describe the project team's commitment to participating in the cohort-based professional learning community and technical assistance provided by AIR. Explain how the project team will engage in peer learning, contribute to shared knowledge, and apply lessons learned to strengthen practice.

Project Timeline and Work Plan

Describe the proposed project timeline and work plan, including major activities, milestones, and deliverables over the project period.

Other Initiatives

Describe any existing or secured grant funding that supports the proposed initiative, including how those funds would complement (but not duplicate) activities supported by this grant. Applicants should also briefly note other related initiatives or partnerships they are currently involved in that are relevant to the proposed work.

Budget and Use of Funds

Download and complete the [grant budget template](#) and provide a high-level budget narrative describing how grant funds will be used to support the proposed activities. The budget narrative should be included with the full application PDF, but it does not count toward the 10-page limit. Budgets should align with the scope of work and include appropriate costs for staffing, implementation, evaluation, and participation in required grant activities. Budget categories should be rounded up to the nearest \$100 and may include the following:

- Direct expenses (personnel, consultants, local travel, supplies/materials, trainings/meetings, other expenses)
- Indirect cost allocation on direct expenses
- Subaward recipient expenses (direct subaward costs, indirect cost allocation associated with subawards, and any indirect costs associated with subaward administration by the grantee organization)

Supporting Documents (Optional)

Applicants may submit optional supporting documents, such as letters of support from institutional leaders, collaborating departments, or proposed subcontractors/partners; logic models; or other materials that provide additional context for the proposed work. These materials are not required but may be used to clarify project plans, partnerships, or institutional commitment.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the geographical requirements for eligibility?

Eligible applicants must be public or private, not-for-profit, degree-granting postsecondary institutions located or serving students in Chicago or Lake County, Illinois, including institutions with a physical campus in either region.

What is expected of grantees?

Grantees will be expected to implement their proposed project, participate in the professional learning community and coaching activities facilitated by AIR, collect and use data to support continuous improvement, engage in peer learning and feedback activities, complete required grant reporting, and develop both an evaluation report and a dissemination plan. Grantees are also expected to center student voice in their work and actively engage in evaluation and learning activities throughout the grant period.

What are the benefits for grantees?

Grantees will receive funding to evaluate, strengthen, expand, or launch wraparound supports. In addition, they will participate in a cohort-based professional learning community; receive individualized coaching and technical assistance from AIR; learn from peer institutions; and receive guidance on program design, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement. AIR will also provide support for dissemination activities in the final year of the grant.

What does the review process entail? Is it the same for all projects?

All proposals will first be reviewed to confirm they meet the basic eligibility requirements outlined in the RFP, including institutional eligibility, geographic requirements, and alignment with the focus on wraparound student support programs. Eligible proposals will then undergo a competitive review process. Each proposal will be reviewed by at least two reviewers with substantial subject matter expertise who will independently assess proposals. Reviewers will assess proposals using a common rubric aligned with the published review criteria. Reviewers will consider factors such as the clarity and feasibility of the proposed project, alignment with the goals of the initiative, meaningful integration of student voice, institutional capacity to implement the work, commitment to participating in technical assistance and peer learning activities, the quality and feasibility of the evaluation approach, and plans for sustainability and long-term impact. Because this initiative is designed to support a range of projects—from launching new supports to strengthening, expanding, or evaluating existing programs—reviewers will consider proposals within the context of their stated goals, scope, and stage of development. Applicants are not expected to propose the same types of activities or evaluation approaches; rather, reviewers will assess whether the proposed approach is appropriate and feasible for the proposed project.

What criteria will be used to evaluate proposals?

Eligible proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Program design and rationale:** Strength of the proposed project, clarity of goals, alignment with institutional and initiative priorities, and feasibility of implementation
- **Centering student voice:** Meaningful and ongoing incorporation of student perspectives into project design, implementation, and evaluation
- **Evidence, data, and evaluation:** Use of data and evidence, quality of the evaluation approach, and plans for learning and continuous improvement
- **Institutional capacity and staffing:** Qualifications of project staff, institutional commitment, and capacity to successfully implement the proposed work
- **Participation in learning and technical assistance:** Commitment to engaging in the professional learning community, coaching, and peer learning activities

- **Budget and use of funds:** Alignment of the budget with project goals and the appropriateness of proposed expenditures
- **Sustainability and long-term impact:** Potential for sustaining successful practices and achieving long-term benefits for students and the institution
- **Overall quality and clarity:** Organization, completeness, and responsiveness of the proposal

When can I expect to hear back about my application?

Award decisions are expected to be made and applicants notified by February 24, 2027. Grant awards are anticipated approximately 30 days after notification, depending on institutional review of grant agreements.

Who should be on my project team?

The proposed project lead must be employed by the institution submitting the proposal. Project teams should include individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and authority to successfully implement and evaluate the proposed work. This may include staff with expertise in wraparound supports, student success initiatives, advising, student affairs, program implementation, institutional decision-making, data collection and analysis, and continuous improvement. Applicants are encouraged to include individuals with experience collecting and analyzing quantitative and/or qualitative data; working with institutional research or data systems; and, where applicable, navigating institutional review board processes. Institutions should also identify staff responsible for participation in grant activities and coordination with AIR.

What qualifies as a wraparound support for proposed projects?

Wraparound supports are coordinated services and connections designed to address barriers that affect students' ability to persist in and complete their education. Examples include basic needs supports such as food, housing, and transportation assistance; targeted financial assistance, such as emergency aid or completion grants; academic coaching and tutoring; holistic coaching, advising, and mental and physical health support; and career development or job placement assistance. Applicants are not limited to these examples and may propose other approaches that align with the initiative's goals.

What kinds of projects may I propose?

Projects should focus on strengthening, expanding, launching, or evaluating a wraparound support program. Examples of projects that may be a good fit include the following:

- Scaling or strengthening an existing wraparound support model that has shown promise
- Holistic advising, success coaching, or coordinated student support approaches
- Comprehensive first-year experience initiatives, including advising, onboarding, orientation, courses, interventions, or other supports designed to improve persistence

- Basic needs support programs addressing food, housing, transportation, technology access, or related barriers
- Emergency aid, micro-grants, completion grants, or other targeted financial support strategies
- Academic or nonacademic peer support models, including peer mentoring and peer coaching
- Cohort-based student support models
- Efforts to improve coordination across academic and nonacademic services
- Evaluation and improvement of existing wraparound support programs
- Institutional capacity-building efforts that strengthen the use of data, evidence, and continuous improvement to support student success

These examples are illustrative rather than exhaustive. Applicants are encouraged to propose innovative approaches that respond to the needs of their students and institutional context.

What kind of student outcomes should we focus on/include in the evaluation?

Applicants should identify outcomes that align with their proposed project and are feasible to measure during the grant period. These may include both academic and nonacademic outcomes. Examples include retention, persistence, engagement, belonging, utilization of supports, or other indicators that demonstrate progress toward longer term goals. For projects designed to affect outcomes that may not be observable during the grant period, such as graduation or credential attainment, applicants are encouraged to identify meaningful leading indicators of success. AIR will provide technical assistance and one-to-one coaching focused on evaluation and continuous improvement throughout the grant period, including refining outcome measures in collaboration with grantees as appropriate.

Is there a required timeline for projects?

Projects will operate during the grant period, from March 2027 through February 2030. Applicants should submit a project timeline and work plan that include major activities, milestones, and deliverables across this period.

Are grantees expected to share student-level data with AIR?

No. Grantees will be expected to collect and use data to support their own evaluation and continuous improvement efforts, but they will not be required to share data with AIR. AIR will provide coaching and technical assistance related to evaluation and data use.

Where can I find the budget template?

Please find the [grant budget template](#) by clicking on the hyperlink to download the excel template. Please email the project team if you have any issues accessing.

What is the allowance for indirect costs?

Indirect costs are allowable but may not exceed 15% of direct expenses. Applicants should include indirect costs in their proposed budget.

What constitutes allowable or unallowable expenses?

Allowable expenses include personnel, salaries, fringe benefits, consultants, travel, supplies and materials, trainings, meetings, evaluation activities, and participation in required grant activities.

Can funding be used to “buy out” course time for instructors/faculty at institutions?

Yes. Applicants may propose to use funding to buy out course time for faculty and instructors.

Can funding be used for subawards to external partners?

Yes. Applicants may propose subawards to external partners (such as community-based organizations), provided the postsecondary institution remains the lead applicant and primary participant in grant activities. Proposals that include subawards should provide a clear justification for the partnership and explain how the work will be sustained after the grant period.

Is there a minimum and/or maximum funding level that will be considered?

Projects may request up to \$250,000 per grant year, for a maximum of \$750,000 over the 3-year grant period.

About the Funders

This work reflects a locally focused initiative made possible through funding from [Schreiber Philanthropy](#), alongside contributions from other Chicago-area philanthropic partners supporting student persistence and completion.

About the American Institutes for Research

Established in 1946, the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit institution that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance both domestically and internationally in the areas of health, education, and the workforce. With headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, AIR has offices across the U.S. and abroad. For more information, visit www.air.org.

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