



## **URBAN AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR CIVIC LEARNING AND STUDENT SUCCESS CIVIC PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE**

### **CALL FOR PARTICIPATION**

#### **Background**

A consortium of four organizations—Campus Compact, the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU), Education Commission of the States (ECS), and Generation Citizen—are launching an initiative to advance civic learning and student success across the education continuum. The initiative is grounded in the understanding that civic learning is both intrinsically important and is a powerful way to deepen students' engagement in their own education, thereby promoting their overall success. The initiative is a team-based approach designed to support local education partnerships through an Action Summit and complementary learning communities.

Building on the State Civic Education Policy Framework developed by ECS and the Action Civics curriculum of Generation Citizen, we will bring together teams representing cities or regions to develop a collaborative approach for civic learning across all levels of education. Teams will include representatives from colleges or universities, K-12 systems or schools, and other appropriate local entities, such as local governments, local philanthropies, and youth-serving organizations. The central purpose of the partnerships is to make experiential civic learning an expected part of students' learning throughout school and college.

Specific initiative goals are:

- (1) to foster dialogues within cities and regions about the opportunities for preparing young people from underserved communities for lives of success, participation, and leadership;
- (2) to incubate partnerships that connect civic learning, educational attainment, and financial self-sufficiency;
- (3) to provide high-quality evidence about the effectiveness of various approaches to promoting civic learning and success in order to enable replication; and
- (4) to inform state civic education policy-making by testing the ECS framework in a variety of locales.

#### **Action Summit and Learning Community**

We will launch the initiative with an Action Summit to be held on **November 18, 2015**, at the University of Maryland, Baltimore in Baltimore, MD. At the Summit, team members will learn about the State Civic Education Policy Framework and the Action Civics curriculum.

Developed by ECS' National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, the **State Civic Education Policy Framework** captures the recommendations of leading experts on civic education (<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/16/12/11612.pdf>).

The Framework is intended to guide education leaders as they address the complexities of preparing students for college, career and civic life. It allows for adaptation to state- and site-specific circumstances and may be adopted in whole or in piecemeal fashion, according to local circumstances. The Framework rests on the assumption that the prevailing paradigm for education, with its nearly exclusive focus on college and career readiness and accountability structures is not well aligned with the civic mission of schools. A shift in this paradigm for education — and an associated realignment of education investments — is necessary to achieve this mission.

Generation Citizen's **Action Civics Curriculum** focuses on students learning about the political process through taking real action on local issues they care about (<http://www.generationcitizen.org/curriculum>). This has included testifying to state legislatures on public transit laws, creating peer juries at schools, and changing water policy in towns. Generation Citizen's teacher training program provides an action civics curriculum, relevant pedagogy, access to an internal website filled with advocacy information, and access to staff support throughout the year, in addition to networking with other teachers engaging in the programming.

The Summit will also include a planning session, during which local teams will identify specific actions to be taken by team members to implement an experiential civic learning plan in their city or region. Participants in the Summit will subsequently participate in a series of online learning exchanges to build on ideas discussed at the Summit and discuss successes and challenges with peers from other cities and regions.

Benefits for participating teams:

- Mini-grants to support travel to the Action Summit
- New intervention tools
- Intimate group setting for learning, planning and experimenting
- Longer term support through a learning community of teams with shared goals and national partner organizations

Expectations for participating teams:

- Attend the Summit; develop a civic learning plan
- Share information about your activities and experience
- Participate in the virtual learning community



### **Civic Partnership Initiative: Participation Mini-Grants**

To enable participation in the Summit by broad-based urban and regional teams, we are making available small grants to cover participants' travel and lodging expenses. While the applicants for these grants will be institutions of higher education, funds will be used to cover the expenses of all participants, particularly those who cannot access institutional or organizational funds for this purpose.

Mini-grant applications should contain the following information:

- 1. Project Lead at applicant institution.** The Project Lead will be the point of contact for project information for the team.
- 2. Team members and rationales for participation.** Teams must consist of five to ten individuals, including representatives from at least one higher education institution and one school or school system. Teams may include representatives from several higher education institutions, several schools or school systems, other public offices or agencies, youth-serving organizations, and other locally relevant entities. Teams may include students. In this section of the application, teams should identify all team members and provide a brief rationale for each member's participation. Please describe how these institutions and individuals have collaborated in the past.
- 3. Motivation for participation.** A brief statement (no more than 500 words) of why the team and its constituent organizations wish to participate in this project.
- 4. Letters of commitment from CEOs.** The application must be accompanied by a letter from the CEO of each of the institutions or organizations represented on the team. The letter must indicate that the CEO will support the organization's continued participation in the project and will enable the team member to contribute to its development. The letter should also include an explanation of the importance to the organization of advancing civic learning and success through a partnership focused on experiential civic learning.

### **Timeline**

- September 30, 2015: Mini-grant requests are due to Campus Compact. Please send submissions to Rania Ezzo at [rezzo@compact.org](mailto:rezzo@compact.org).
- October 7, 2015: Teams will be notified of awards.
- November 18, 2015: Action Summit in Baltimore, MD
- November 2015 – on-going: Participant resource sharing