

**Request for Proposals
Stronger by Degrees Student Success Grants**

The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) is soliciting proposals from Kentucky’s public four-year universities and KCTCS campuses for grant funding to improve student progression and completion, with an emphasis on improving success strategies for low-income and underrepresented minority students. These funds, in the form of $50,000 competitive grants, will be awarded to five institutions for a grant period of one year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020). The grants will support strategies to improve performance on metrics that are part of Kentucky's new performance funding model.

**Background:**

[*Stronger by Degrees*](http://www.cpe.ky.gov/ourwork/strongerbydegrees.html)*,* Kentucky’s strategic agenda for postsecondary education, sets an ambitious goal that by 2030 sixty percent of Kentucky’s adult population will have earned a postsecondary degree or certificate of value. Achieving the goal will lead to increased job creation, a stronger economy, a more skilled, productive workforce and a population that enjoys better health and stronger communities. However, reaching the goal will demand a much stronger focus on making sure every student has the opportunity and support structures to succeed in a postsecondary education environment.

Kentucky's new performance funding model supports the goals of the state agenda by incentivizing student progression and completion outcomes. Like the strategic agenda, the funding model emphasizes the importance of closing achievement gaps and driving improved completion rates for all Kentucky students, regardless of income, minority status, age, region, or level of preparation. The Stronger by Degrees Student Success Grants have been identified as an additional tool to assist institutions improve outcomes and student success.

**Supported strategies:**

Successful applicants for the Stronger by Degrees Student Success Grants will identify strategies to drive improved student outcomes, particularly for low-income and underrepresented minority students. Projects may include:

* Improved advising, mentoring and academic coaching;
* Support services to help students respond to childcare, food insecurity, housing and other needs;
* Research and data analysis supporting college completion;
* Guided pathways based on academic and career goals;
* Other proven practices supporting progression and completion.

**Proposals Requirements and Evaluation**

A review committee selected and coordinated by CPE will be established to evaluate each of the proposals based on the following elements:

1. An overview of the institution’s current commitment to improving college completion, and specifically the campus commitment to the success of at-risk student populations. Please identify current strengths the campus wants to build on, as well as challenges the grant will help address. (20 points)
2. A narrative of how the grant will be used to advance evidence-based programs or strategies leading to stronger outcomes for low-income and underrepresented minority students. (40 points)
3. Evaluation methods for determining the impact of new programs, strategies, or enhancements to existing efforts. (15 points)
4. A budget of how grant funds will be spent. See accompanying budget proposal form. (15 points)
5. A letter from the institution’s president providing evidence of strong support and commitment. (10 points)

The proposal should be no more than five pages, plus the budget form and letter from the president. It should provide evidence of the institutional resources and personnel necessary to support the proposed activities and assurances that the project can be implemented over the life of the grant. The Council reserves the right, once an initial selection has been made, to negotiate the final terms of the agreement.

**If selected, campuses agree to and understand that they:**

* Must provide both a mid-term and final report to the CPE:
* Dec. 30, 2019 – Activities and progress through 12/15/19
* July 15, 2020 – Final report and project assessment
* The mid-term and final reports should include the following:
* Financial overview, which includes an update on the grant’s budget, expenditures and grant funds remaining.
* An overview of implementation and progress
* Lessons learned, including specific challenges or successes in implementing the program.

**Submission of Proposals**

* Applicants must submit one (1) complete electronic version of the proposal.
* Proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 1 by Mary Allison (mary.allison@ky.gov).
* Identify your submission with “Proposal for Stronger by Degrees Student Success Grant” in the subject line of the email.
* Applicants will receive a confirmation email of receipt.
* Questions about or clarification of grant proposal requirements will be accepted by email at lee.nimocks@ky.gov until Wednesday, April 24.

**Award Notification**

All institutions submitting proposals will be notified in writing regarding the status of their proposal after all proposals have been evaluated. The Council reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals in whole or in part and bears no responsibility for any costs incurred while preparing any proposal.

**Other Terms and Conditions**

This is a fixed price grant, and any unexpended funds remaining after the expiration of the agreement can be retained by the institution to further strategies supporting improvements in student success outcomes. Indirect costs will not be funded.