



Cullen Foundation Supplemental Academic Program Strategy Update

June 2020

Our strategy remains squarely focused on improving measurable academic outcomes for students

Our intended impact:

Increase the number of supplemental academic programs that demonstrably improve academic outcomes* along with the number of low-income students served by these programs.

***Academic outcomes include but are not limited to:**
GPA, test scores, kindergarten readiness, HS graduation, and college matriculation.

Our revised strategy is anchored by 4 key principles



Focused on impact – Grants to SAPs must produce academic outcomes



Open to innovation – The Foundation will remain relatively agnostic about *how* the program produces those outcomes



Evidence-based – Grant amount and type will be tied to a program's level of evidence — programs with stronger evidence will receive more funding and be able to use it more flexibly



Sector-building — the Foundation will focus on increasing the number of programs that can demonstrate strong outcomes by investing in program capacity-building, data use, outcome evaluation, program design, and delivery

Going forward, evidence of impact will determine program eligibility for Cullen's SAP investment stages (1 of 2)

Stage 0: Promising model but lacking data collection

- Evidence-informed program model
- Limited or inconclusive data collection

Stage 1: Clear logic model and data collection in place

- Evidence-based program model
- Well-defined logic model that is testable
- Data collection systems in place with effort to study impact planned or underway

Stage 2: Correlational evidence of impact

- Strong, statistically significant positive impact
- Well-designed and implemented correlational study that statistically controls for selection bias

Stage 3: Causal evidence of impact

- Strong, statistically significant positive impact
- Experimental or quasi-experimental study that randomizes teachers or schools

Going forward, evidence of impact will determine program eligibility for Cullen's SAP investment stages (2 of 2)

Stage	Stage 0: Promising model but lacking data	Stage 1: Clear logic model and data collection in place (<i>ESSA tier 4</i>)	Stage 2: Correlational evidence of impact (<i>ESSA tier 3</i>)	Stage 3: Causal evidence of impact (<i>ESSA tier 1 or 2</i>)
Grant Type	Light-touch, standardized supports	Cohort-based program capacity building and program support to enable evaluation	Individualized capacity building, evaluation, and program support	Growth funding
Annual funding	\$5-10k	\$15-40K	\$50-100K	\$100-250K
Grant Duration	2-4 months	6-12 months	1-2 years	2-3 years

Increased evidence quality = increased potential investment

Providers will have access to capacity building modules focused on program design, delivery, and measurement

Programs can build capacity in three key areas:

Program planning and design

- Logic model development
- Process mapping
- User-centered design
- Researching and adopting best practices

Program delivery and improvement

- Current state assessment
- Staff training
- Quality assurance processes for program
- Continuous improvement / how to build an organizational culture that prioritizes evaluation and learning

Program evaluation and data use

- Data analysis
- Preparation for more rigorous program evaluation (coordination with other programs and schools, identifying/prioritizing outcomes, orienting to evidence standards)
- Strategies for developing in-house evaluation skills, funding evaluation activities, and aligning funder requirements
- Summarizing, communicating, and reflecting on evaluation findings

An early-stage program entering Cullen's grant process will receive sequenced support aligned with investment stages

