



## **Request for Proposal**

### **Innovative Solutions in Education-to-Employment**

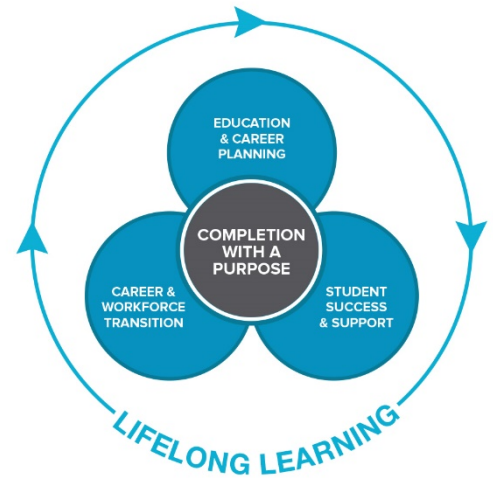
**Deadline: July 23, 2018**

#### **Background**

Strada Education Network<sup>SM</sup> is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to improving lives by catalyzing more direct and promising pathways between education and employment. We engage partners across education, nonprofits, business and government to focus relentlessly on students' success throughout all phases of their working lives. Together, we address critical postsecondary education-to-career challenges through strategic philanthropy, research and insights, and mission-aligned affiliates — all focused on advancing the universal right to realized potential we call Completion With a Purpose<sup>®</sup>.

Since 2014, Strada has advanced its mission impact through more than \$100 million in philanthropic grants and partnerships, yielding innovative approaches to enhance and scale student success models and strengthen education-to-employment pathways. Our Theories of Change and philanthropic priorities focus on the key phases of the student life cycle:

- Improving **Education & Career Planning** by providing tools and guidance to students so they can choose the best education path that leads to a meaningful career;
- Bolstering **Student Success & Support** systems to provide students the resources that need to succeed in the classroom despite obstacles to learning; and
- Supporting **Career & Workforce Transitions** by strengthening institution-employer connections, so students graduate with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the workplace.



### Statement of Purpose

Strada Education Network is committed to investing philanthropic resources to increase and accelerate postsecondary enrollment and completion rates that lead to successfully launching rewarding careers. Our efforts will specifically address the persistent skills gap in which graduates lack the abilities and competencies that employers demand and value.

Strada envisions a collaborative and networked approach to connecting individuals to education and the workforce more effectively. Through this approach, postsecondary providers, community-based organizations, civic leaders, employers and families are viewed as valued partners in the effort to connect all students and adult learners to college and careers.

We are specifically interested in supporting collaborative, scalable efforts through solutions that:

- Rethink and create new models of career advising,
- Pilot or scale innovative approaches to blend work and learning experiences, and
- Support learners as they transition to and through education and into the workforce.

### Objectives

The objectives of this RFP are as follows:

1. To see improved consumer insights with postsecondary decisions that are aligned to potential careers;
2. To see improved access, persistence and completion rates among all students regardless of their age, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status or previous education background;
3. To result in successful student preparation for and transitions into careers, and
4. To identify strategic, innovative and scalable approaches to delivery of education-to-employment pathways.

Proposals should prioritize solutions serving under-represented, low-income, first-generation, current or aspiring secondary, postsecondary students, or adult learners to:

- Develop, enhance or increase access to career advising and career assessment tools,
- Develop, enhance or increase access to work-based learning and internship opportunities, and/or
- Develop, enhance or increase job and soft-skill (e.g. critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, etc.) and competencies of individuals for such target populations.

## Criteria

Strada is seeking to make philanthropic investments in innovative and strategic opportunities that are:

- **Employer-Driven:** Involves employers as integral to the design, implementation and achievement of student outcomes
- **Evidence-Based:** Integrates evidence-based education and career advising tools and approaches
- **Labor Market Driven:** Initiatives are informed by and aligned with labor market demand data
- **Advance Education and Work Alignment:** Integrates work-based learning opportunities with education, internships, apprenticeships and training programs
- **Structured for Large Scale Impact:** Serves large number of individuals/can achieve large-scale impact
- **Innovative and Scalable:** Enhances prior learnings and is replicable to deliver significant improvement in the education-to-employment pipeline
- **Leverage Additional Support:** Demonstrates ability to match grant award with existing or potential financial or in-kind support over the next three years
- **Collaborative:** Should include at least three of the four partner categories identified below:
  - Employers,
  - Community-based organizations,
  - Education partners to include postsecondary education, high schools, credential programs or designated training entity, and
  - Public sector partners.



## Impact

Proposals should demonstrate students' improved satisfaction with postsecondary decisions leading to completion and alignment with career opportunities by increasing:

- The number of students receiving or utilizing effective career pathway advice or tools,
- The number of students pursuing career pathways because they utilized the advice or tools,
- The number of students successfully enrolled and retained in post-secondary education,
- The number of internship and work-based learning opportunities for students,

- The number of employers effectively engaged in workforce transition programs and/or engaged in work-based experiences tied to a student’s field of study, and
- The number and percentage of credentials earned.

**Eligibility and Selection Criteria**

Non-profit organizations holding a current tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3), (4), (6), or (10) listed on the IRS Master File and in good standing are eligible to submit a Concept Paper via Cybergrants at [https://www.cybergrants.com/strada/concept\\_application](https://www.cybergrants.com/strada/concept_application). Use invitation code 936ZCZYTFB to submit a Concept Paper for this RFP. Strada does not fund programs outside the U.S. A review committee will select candidates to submit a Full Application, from which grantees will be selected for three-year awards from a pool of \$5 million.

Grant recipients will be required to provide 25% in matching support in the form of grants, gifts and/or in-kind service over the life of the grant. Up to 30% of proposed funding may be used to support personnel. The grant may be used for planning, implementation and evaluation purposes.

***Invitation by Strada Education Network to complete a concept paper, submit a request for proposals response, or complete a full grant application shall not be deemed a pledge and is expressly not a contract for funding by Strada. Such invitation shall not be considered a receivable for accounting purposes. No agreement exists between invitees and Strada Education Network until a final Grant Agreement is fully executed by both parties.***

**Timeline**

RFP Issue Date	June 18, 2018
Informational Webinar	June 27, 2018 at 2 p.m. EST
Concept Papers Due	July 23, 2018
Applicants Notified of Invitation to Submit Full Application	September 4, 2018
Grant Information Webinar (if needed)	September 2018
Full Applications Due	October 2, 2018
Notification of Intent to Award/Grant Agreements Issued	December 14, 2018
Grant Agreement Due to Strada	December 31, 2018
Grant Period	Jan 1, 2019 – Dec 30, 2021

Additional information is posted on [www.stradaeducation.org/philanthropy](http://www.stradaeducation.org/philanthropy).

Questions may be directed to [jane.howard@stradaeducation.org](mailto:jane.howard@stradaeducation.org).