Request for Proposals
Knowledge for Freedom
Fall 2021

The Knowledge for Freedom initiative supports programs that invite underserved high school students to college to study humanity's deepest questions about leading lives of purpose and civic responsibility. Grants of varying amounts, ranging from $100,000-$300,000 over a 36-month period, will be made to each funded project participating in this initiative. The size of the grant will be based on the scope of the project. Colleges and Universities interested in launching Knowledge for Freedom programs are encouraged to apply for planning grants, ranging from $10,000 to $25,000 over a 6-12 month period.

Goals

Knowledge for Freedom programs invite underserved high school students to study humanity's deepest questions about leading lives of purpose and civic responsibility. Between the junior and senior years of high school, students come into residence on a college campus, where they experience the intensity of a seminar-sized discussion taught by college professors focused on major works of philosophy and literature. Over the following year, while applying to college as high school seniors, the students engage in civic initiatives inspired by the recognition that their lives are interconnected with the lives of others.

High school students who typically find themselves shut out from opportunities available to their more affluent peers are thus provided with an opportunity to undertake college-level work in the humanities, to build meaningful relationships with college faculty and college students, who serve them as mentors, and to develop, through practice, civic skills with their peers. Knowledge for Freedom programs, as demonstrated by the "Freedom and Citizenship" model program at Columbia University, dramatically improve college readiness, admission prospects, and college graduation, while building interest in humanistic writing and issues, as well as habits of civic engagement that persist during and after college.

Criteria for Project Proposals
The Knowledge for Freedom initiative is designed to be adaptable enough to reflect the assets and needs of each institution and coherent enough to create a community of shared practice among programs across the nation. All Knowledge for Freedom programs reflect certain common features:

- All programs bring low-income high school students onto a college campus for an intensive summer seminar in the humanities taught by college faculty and supported by undergraduate teaching assistants.

- All syllabi include transformative texts in the humanities connected by ideas or questions about the nature of government, freedom, and democracy. We define transformative texts as works—whether ancient or recent—that have transformed the world and that continue to transform individual lives by the power of their ideas and expression.

- During the following academic year, all programs offer formalized assistance with college applications and direct students in a civic engagement or public service project.

- All programs engage with their alumni by sponsoring events, facilitating mentorships, or by connecting them with opportunities to continue their civic engagement.

Successful concept papers pay close attention to the attributes listed above and address the following:

- The Syllabus:
  Proposals should include a draft and explanation of the summer seminar syllabus.

- Faculty and Institutional Leadership:
  Proposals should include the names of the faculty director or co-directors who will run the program and potential partners who will help with high school student recruitment.

- Sustainability Plan:
  Successful applicants will clearly articulate how proposed programs are aligned with institutional priorities and will be sustained beyond the life of the grant. Grants from the Teagle Foundation are made in the expectation that once the formal grant period ends, should the piloted efforts be successful, the costs associated with supporting the work will be absorbed by the participating institution.

Submission Process
Requests for grant support will be considered following our two-stage application process. First, we ask that prospective grantees share brief concept papers, described below, stating whether they are interested in planning or implementation grants. After review of the concept papers, a limited number of applicants will then be invited to submit full proposals. For complete details on the submission process, please refer to information on how we grant.

Concept papers for this initiative will be reviewed three times per year with submissions due by December 1, March 1 and August 1. The Teagle Foundation's fiscal year begins on July 1 and its Board of Directors reviews all grant requests when it meets in November, February, and May. If a proposal is invited, program staff will confer with applicants to determine the appropriate timeline for submitting a full proposal in line for potential review by the board. All concept papers should be submitted electronically at proposals@teagle.org. If invited, full proposals will be submitted through the Foundation's online application system.

Applying for a Planning Grant

The majority of Knowledge for Freedom programs begin with a planning grant. All Knowledge for Freedom programs require intensive planning, significant time commitment, and serious support from outside experts on such topics as syllabus planning, the social dynamics of high school students, college readiness support, and writing coaching. Recognizing the value of variation across programs, the Teagle Foundation appreciates that each college or university will require a 6-12 month planning process to create a program that responds to its local culture—to its particular resources, curricular traditions, and surrounding cultural and political institutions. The Foundation will expect an implementation proposal at the close of the planning process.

We encourage interested institutions to submit a 3-5 page concept paper that outlines the timeline for establishing the necessary ingredients to launch a program. We also encourage applicants to review the Knowledge for Freedom Planning Toolkit here.

Applying for an Implementation Grant

We encourage interested institutions to submit a 3-5 page concept paper that names the lead faculty who will serve as the director or co-director on the project, the departmental home for the program, and lists all of the institutional partners necessary for launching a Knowledge for Freedom Program.

FOUNDATION CONTACT: Please contact Tamara Mann Tweel, program director for civic initiatives, at ttweel@teagle.org if you have questions about the Knowledge for Freedom Initiative.