

Request for Proposals: 2016 Learning Phase Consultants

The William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund is looking for consultants to design and support Learning Conversations as part of its 2016 Learning Phase. Our goal is to inform our thinking and strategies as we begin to pursue our new mission: *To achieve equity in education by working with those affected and inspiring all to end racism and poverty.* Please see the attached description of the mission and strategic approaches.

The purpose of these conversations is to learn from others and gain ideas and insights that will help expand our thinking, and inform our strategic approaches and help shape our long-term program framework and funding guidelines. We are committed to effectively incorporating the perspectives of all stakeholders, especially people living in poverty and people of color. Our goals for these meetings are to:

1. Meet with groups from the following sectors:
 - a. Social justice organizations
 - b. Grassroots organizations & the people living in poverty & people of color
 - c. Philanthropy: Memorial Fund's peers within Connecticut and nationally
 - d. School administrators, teachers and others in education (birth to 25)
 - e. Business organizations and leaders
 - f. State & local government leaders & power brokers
2. Explore and generate ideas on how best to flesh out our strategic approaches
3. Identify historical, cultural and political context that serve to block or advance status of racial equity and poverty in CT

Scope of Project & Timetable (March 1-July 31st):

Work with staff lead and team of managers to:

1. **Design Process by March to create** the format and meeting logistics with the different groups listed above and others that may be identified during the design process
2. **Implement and facilitate up to 10 meetings by end of May.** Each meeting may draw anywhere from 20 to 50 people
3. **Produce summary report and recommendations by July**

Description of Desired Outcomes

- A summary document that provides a synthesis of the major points raised across all conversations held
- A set of recommendations for follow up, co-creation and communication with the grassroots participants most affected by race and poverty
- The raw notes taken for each of the conversation.

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Capacities Needed

Consultants or a firm with strong co-creating, designing, facilitation and synthesizing skills to co-facilitate, record and synthesize conversations. Consultants must demonstrate the following:

- An approach that can be effective in identifying key insights on equity in education, with a focus on racism and poverty
- Strong communication skills especially the ability to communicate effectively with racially and economically diverse populations
- Knowledge of philanthropy and learning agendas
- Experience in writing reports and developing recommendations
- Flexibility in adapting to feedback and an evolving understanding of the work

Proposal Content

If you are interested in being considered for this work, please send an email to Carmen Siberon at csiberon@wcgmf.org **by December 14th** to notify us of your intent to submit a proposal. The proposal must include:

1. A brief (3-5 pages) describing your ***approach, the scope of services and a budget*** to **co-design** the learning conversations with Memorial Fund staff and to **facilitate** the meetings.
2. Statement of your qualifications (resumes for all relevant consultants)
3. We ***may ask*** for a list of past clients and references, with contact information, but the list is not required at this time.

Timeline

Email to indicate interest **by December 14th**

Proposal due **by January 8th**

We will review responses and schedule interviews **by mid-January**

Engage consultant **by early February**

Contact Information

If you have any questions, feel free to call or email David Addams, Executive Director, at 203-230-3330 or daddams@wcgmf.org.

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Moving into our new mission: 2016 Learning Phase & Exploratory Grants

The new mission of the Memorial Fund is *to achieve equity in education by working with those affected and inspiring all to end racism and poverty*. To reach equity in education, we are building strategic approaches in two areas:

Working with those most affected by issues of inequity

1. Build assets within children's homes, schools, neighborhoods, and society to reverse the affects of structural racism and poverty
2. Invest in a small number of highly distressed neighborhoods as the center of our work against poverty and racism
3. Support people most affected, especially parents, to navigate and change the barriers they see

Inspiring all to end racism and poverty

1. Promote greater awareness and understanding of the disparities resulting from structural racism, the effects of poverty and the intersection of the two
2. Encourage healing in our society by supporting dialogue, action, policies and practices that advance racial and economic equity

While incredibly excited and ready to jump in, our trustees and staff are mindful of how extraordinarily challenging it will be to address these issues. For this reason, we have initiated a learning phase. In the last few months, we surveyed experts in the fields of education, racism and poverty, held meetings with our current grantees and partners, and sponsored over fifty grantees to attend a national PolicyLink Equity Summit in Los Angeles. In order to continue to learn and develop our future framework and funding guidelines, in the upcoming months our learning phase will include the following primary elements:

1. Hold a series of regional and/or sectoral **Learning Conversations** with national, state and local organizations and groups committed to achieving educational equity and ending racism and poverty.
2. Issue invitations for one-time Exploratory Grants that will reach out to new partners and allow us to learn about innovative and emerging efforts in our state.
3. Explore **Partnerships** and approaches that can inform the Connecticut environment, the field and how we live into our own mission.