



Netter Center
for Community Partnerships
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA
www.nettercenter.upenn.edu

February 20, 2020

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
TO ESTABLISH A
REGIONAL TRAINING/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER
FOR UNIVERSITY-ASSISTED COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

PROJECT GOALS

To develop a regional center on university-assisted community schools at a university or college that will draw on the expertise of an established university-assisted community school initiative to provide training and technical assistance in a multi-state area. The goals of the regional training center will be to:

1. Develop further the funded university's engagement in its own university-assisted community school initiative, particularly the coordination of the university's resources;
2. Provide training and technical assistance on the university-assisted community school model to interested universities and colleges and their school and community partners in a multi-state area.
3. Work with other higher eds in the funded university's immediate region to enlist their participation in the local initiative.

BACKGROUND

The Netter Center for Community Partnerships has received a major gift that will further support its more than twenty-five years of adapting the university-assisted community school model developed with its school and community partners in West Philadelphia. University-assisted

community schools help educate, engage, empower and serve all member of the community in which the school is located. At the same time, working with community members to create and sustain university-assisted community schools provides a powerful means for universities to advance teaching, research and service, as well as the civic development of their students.

In this phase of the work, the Netter Center is no longer seeking to provide seed funds to new sites across the country to begin or expand work with their local school(s), but to work through a university or college that is part of a university-assisted community school initiative that can serve as a training/technical assistance site for a multi-state region (two or more states including the applicants state) of the United States as defined by the applicant. The first such regional training center was supported at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, and included Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and Oklahoma as the target states in the southwest United State, and the second regional training center was supported at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis for the midwest region, including Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, Illinois, and Indiana. The third regional center was the University of Connecticut to work in New England. The current regional center is UCLA, which works across California, Oregon and Washington states.

The Netter Center has identified core principles of the university-assisted community school model as well as its replication/adaptation that the funded university should be familiar with and implement in its own work. The university-assisted community school strategy is based upon the following ideas:

- University-assisted community schools are designed to help educate, engage, activate, and serve all members of the community in which the school is located.
- The strategy assumes that community schools, like higher eds, can function as focal points to help create healthy environments and that both universities and colleges function best in such environments.
- Somewhat more specifically, the strategy assumes that, like higher eds, public schools can function as environment-changing institutions and can become the strategic centers of broadly based partnerships that genuinely engage a wide variety of community organizations and institutions.
- More than any other institution, public schools are particularly well suited, therefore, to function as neighborhood “hubs” or “centers,” around which local partnerships can be

generated and developed.

- When they play that innovative role, schools function as community institutions *par excellence*. They then provide a decentralized, democratic, community-based response to rapidly changing community problems. In the process, they help young people learn better, at increasingly higher levels, through action-oriented, collaborative, real-world problem solving.
- Working to solve complex, real-world problems is the best way to advance knowledge and learning, as well as the general capacity of individuals and institutions to advance knowledge and learning.
- Moreover, if the neighborhood school were to function as a genuine community center, it needs additional human resources and support.
- The Netter Center emphasizes *university-assisted* because community schools require far more resources than traditional schools do and because it has become convinced that universities constitute the strategic sources of broadly based, comprehensive, sustained support for community schools.

From 1993-2008 the Netter Center was supported to adapt its university-assisted community school model at specific sites across the country as well as to provide training and technical assistance. With funding from the Wallace Foundation and the Corporation for National Service, 23 university-community-school partnerships adapted the university-assisted community school framework. Additionally, with support from the Mott Foundation, over 75 teams attended the Netter Center's training workshops on the university-assisted community school model. Many hundreds of other visitors have come to Penn to learn more about this work. With the increasing number of colleges and universities mobilizing their resources to develop university-assisted community schools and innovative university-community partnerships, the Netter Center, in collaboration with the Coalition for Community Schools and Rutgers University-Camden, organized a University-Assisted Community Schools Network. The UACS Network launched in February 2015 with participation from over 20 universities that are facilitating university-assisted community schools. Approximately 70 higher education institutions are now part of this network, which holds monthly calls and aims to build a professional learning community among higher education leaders that shares resources and best practices to advance university-assisted community schools policy and practice.

In this phase of our replication/adaptation, the Netter Center has chosen to focus on creating regional centers based at higher education institutions across the country that can build on substantive local university-assisted community school programs, and have the capacity to train others in their regions on university-assisted community schools.

In supporting other universities and colleges around the country in developing university-assisted community schools, the Netter Center recognizes that local circumstances need to be taken into consideration as programs are developed. These include, but are not limited to, the type of university and its resources, stage of development of university engagement with local schools and communities, readiness at the school site, demographic variations, and the wider local context of support for community schools. However, we have found that there are key elements of the model that need to be in place, regardless of the specific program activities. Among them are:

1. Connection to the core mission of the university through academically based community service, service intrinsically linked to research and teaching;
2. Development of academic partnerships that link the university and the school curriculum through a problem solving approach;
3. Students at all levels, graduate and undergraduate, should be engaged;
4. Coordination of university resources (academic, work-study, volunteer) by a designated person(s), ideally placed in an office dedicated to civic engagement, is essential;
5. At the school site, a coordinator is essential to integrate university and other community resources; and
6. The university-assisted community school leverages other resources from the university, the school, other partners and the broader community as appropriate.

The university or college selected to be the regional center should reflect the above elements in practice in its community schools, as well as in working with other university-community-school partnerships on advancing this model.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Netter Center will contract with the selected university for a period of three years, renewable annually. The annual contract will be for \$50,000. No indirect costs are allowable.

The selected site will have a project director who will work closely with the Netter Center's director for replication activities, as well as close connection to the local university-assisted community school efforts.

We expect that the selected site will:

- Have an office dedicated to civic engagement that has worked with university-assisted community school programs as a major part of its portfolio
- Secure local funding to support the proposed work
- Host visits as requested by other universities and colleges in the applicant's designated multi-state region, or as referred by the Netter Center's project director. The multi-state area must include at least two states (including the applicant's state).
- Host a conference or series of workshops on the university-assisted community school model more generally for the multi-state region
- Continue to advance the engagement of higher eds in the immediate region in the local university-assisted community school initiative
- Continue as the university's liaison between the campus, the community school initiative and the broader city leadership to garner support for university-assisted community schools
- Contribute articles on the local and replication activities for the Netter Center's *Universities and Community Schools* journal as requested

- Participate in the monthly calls of the University-Assisted Community School Network

APPLICATION

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

The applicant is requested to send a 7-10 page program narrative that outlines:

- Experience with university-assisted community schools
- Commitment of the University/College to the local work and becoming a regional center
- Identification of the states that will be the target areas for the regional center and the rationale for the selection of these states. The regional center must work with at least two states including the applicant's state.
- Capacity to carry out the scope of work, including staffing and overall ability to develop the regional network
- Discussion of how training and technical assistance would be organized, including engagement of local partners in any trainings

BUDGET AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The proposed funding is \$50,000 per year for three years. A budget for year one only is required with the application. A 1-1 match, cash or in-kind, is required. No indirect costs are allowable. The grantee will submit reports to the Netter Center twice a year on its progress. The start day for the award is September 1, 2020.

SUBMISSION

Please submit your proposal electronically by May 17, 2020 at 5 PM Eastern Daylight Savings
Time to:

Joann Weeks
Associate Director
Netter Center for Community Partnerships
University of Pennsylvania
3819-33 Chestnut Street, Suite 120
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3465
weeks@upenn.edu

For questions, contact Joann Weeks at 215-898-0872, or weeks@upenn.edu

Information on the Netter Center's university-assisted community school model is on its website,
www.nettercenter.upenn.edu