Introduction

Higher education has historically been an important focus area for the James Graham Brown Foundation (JGBF). Educational attainment is closely linked with economic opportunity and mobility for individuals. Students with post-high school credentials are more likely to be employed and earn more. Educational attainment is also correlated with better health and many other important outcomes.

In addition to the motivation of providing greater opportunity and economic mobility for Kentuckians, there is a broader economic case for postsecondary education. Demand for students with some education beyond high school is continuing to grow at a rapid pace. Whereas only 25% of jobs required some form of postsecondary education 30 years ago, over 60% require higher education today. Virtually all new jobs created since the recession of 2008 require postsecondary education.¹

JGBF makes grants with the goal of strengthening and enriching educational opportunities and outcomes provided by postsecondary institutions in Kentucky. Our higher education grantmaking is focused on three primary goals: (1) supporting postsecondary student success, (2) supporting community and economic development in Eastern Kentucky and West Louisville and (3) supporting regional and national distinction.

Supporting Postsecondary Student Success (Public Institutions)

The goal of this grantmaking focus is to support systemic efforts at Kentucky's public two-year and four-year institutions to increase student completion rates, lower costs and decrease attainment gaps for low-income, first-generation and minority students. Of interest are programs and initiatives that:

¹ Anthonly P. Canevale, Tamara Jayasundera and Artem Gulish, 2016, “America’s Divided Recovery, College Haves and Have-Nots”, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.
• Accelerate and improve institutional innovation and supports to increase student success, particularly for low-income, first-generation and minority students.
• Improve pathways for students to complete college with meaningful degrees and career-ready skills.
• Increase students’ persistence and degree completion.
• Scale efforts to ensure postsecondary affordability.

**Supporting Community and Economic Development Efforts in Eastern Kentucky & West Louisville (Public & Independent Institutions)**

The goal of this grantmaking focus is to support efforts of postsecondary institutions to accelerate economic growth and social mobility in the two regions that are the focus of JGBF’s community and economic development grantmaking program. Of interest are programs and initiatives that:

• Connect people to jobs with livable wages in sectors of the economy that are stable and growing.
• Increase access to credentials with labor-market value and decrease the time and cost to earn those credentials.
• Accelerate entrepreneurship by increasing access to supports designed to develop the capacity of nascent and novice entrepreneurs.
• Leverage the potential of postsecondary institutions to play a leadership role in regional transformation and in supporting community and economic development.

**Supporting Regional and National Distinction (Independent Institutions)**

The goal of this grantmaking focus is to remain responsive to opportunities where philanthropy can play a meaningful role in initiatives that are transformative for independent institutions creating regional and national distinction.

**Proposal Review Deadline, Process and Notification**

Applications are by invitation. The foundation will consider a broad range of proposals focusing on the areas described above. Institutions may submit proposals that help develop and/or pilot new programs, grants that enhance and/or scale existing programs, capacity
building grants as well as other funding mechanisms. The foundation is especially interested in opportunities to leverage other public and private funding streams. Successful proposals will include:

- close alignment with the foundation’s areas of interest
- focus on measurable outcomes and/or impact
- well-defined link to the institution’s strategic plan and long-range goals
- clear monitoring and evaluation plan tied to proposed outcomes
- compelling evidence of institutional commitment and/or broad-based philanthropic support
- detailed and reasonable analysis of sustainability beyond the grant period

**Application Procedures**

Invitations are obtained from JGBF staff. To initiate discussion about potential proposals, contact education program staff at 502-208-4673 or bleik@jgbf.org. Program staff may request a brief concept paper prior to any call or meeting.

Institutions are strongly encouraged to initiate conversations with as much lead time as possible. Program staff work closely with organizations to assess the fit and readiness of potential proposals and work collaboratively to support their development. This process can take several weeks or longer. Submitting a concept paper to program staff or via the JGBF online portal is a first step to the development of a proposal and does not constitute a formal application. The deadline below indicates the final dates for submission of a completed formal application:

- Applications must be submitted in final form online no later than **December 2, 2019**. A concept paper **does not** constitute a formal application.
- Institutions will be notified of the foundation’s decision by **February 21, 2020**.
- In most cases, funds will be disbursed no later than **June 30, 2020**.

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