

# **Request for Proposal**

## **Evaluation of the Detroit Area Talent Fund and Corresponding Services**

**Prepared: March 2025**

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## **1.0 Schedule of Events**

|     |   |                     |
|-----|---|---------------------|
| 1.1 | RFP Release Date                          | March 19, 2025      |
| 1.2 | Deadline for Receipt of Written Inquiries | March 28, 2025      |
| 1.3 | Written Responses Distributed             | April 2, 2025       |
| 1.4 | Proposal Due Date                         | April 14, 2025      |
| 1.5 | Proposal Review Period                    | April 15 - 21, 2025 |
| 1.6 | Anticipated Award Notification            | April 25, 2025      |

## **2.0 General Information**

### **2.1 Purpose**

The Detroit Regional Chamber Foundation and Detroit Drives Degrees (D3) seek proposals from qualified research institutions, consultants, or firms to conduct a comprehensive developmental evaluation of postsecondary student success factors based on data collected through the Detroit Area Talent Fund application and anticipated qualitative data collection activities. The selected vendor will be responsible for data aggregation, analysis, and reporting, focusing on tracking student persistence and graduation outcomes while identifying key socioeconomic and experiential factors influencing student success. The primary objectives of this project are to:

- Measure critical factors influencing postsecondary student success.
- Track the persistence and graduation rates of grantees through the National Student Clearinghouse database.
- Compare grant recipient outcomes to students from similar demographic backgrounds.
- Expand data collection to include additional metric data, socioeconomic variables, and student perceptions.
- Understand the role of alternative funding sources in meeting student financial needs.

- Provide insights into the holistic impact of the grant on students' academic and personal well-being.
- Analyze degrees and degree types, especially regarding post-education employment.
- Evaluate the program's effectiveness in its current state, including, but not limited to, graduation rates matching our 60% goal and the ease of the burden while students are enrolled.
- Share recommendations for future strategy implementation and fund growth.

## **2.2 Background**

Comparatively small financial hurdles quickly compound into substantial long-term ramifications for students and the region. When students stop out, they still carry the debt of postsecondary education but do not receive the benefits associated with a credential, such as higher wages and a better quality of life, and it is often, these students most need these benefits. Accordingly, Michigan's skills gap would not narrow, and the state and region would not realize the economic return communities see when more of their residents attain postsecondary education. The students at highest risk of stopping out are those who attend classes part-time, are low-income, are over 25 years old, and/or identify as BILPOC (Black, Indigenous, Latino, People of Color). To meet Michigan's goal of 60% postsecondary degree or certificate attainment by 2030, it is essential to adopt a regional approach that meaningfully and holistically addresses the basic needs of our workforce and student population.

The Last Mile Education Fund (Last Mile) provides a novel approach to streamlining real-time cash flow support for postsecondary students facing challenges beyond their control. The Detroit Regional Chamber and Rocket Community Fund have formed a regional partnership with the Last Mile Education Fund to launch the Detroit Area Talent Fund (DATF). The student response was overwhelming, proving that this model is an effective avenue to reach students and shows promise for future development. While the initial pilot launch of the DATF confirmed the demand and need for just-in-time funding, the next phase of the rollout provides the opportunity to collect data and measure the actual effectiveness of the fund. These results will also inform the next steps for wraparound student support and employer engagement. Over two decades of evidence from the MDRC supports this model, confirming that the most effective interventions proven to increase college graduation rates "are

multifaceted student support programs, which typically combine a proactive, holistic coaching or advising model with additional financial supports.”

### **2.3 Contract Term**

The contract resulting from this RFP will commence in April 2025 and will end upon completion of the project December 2026.

### **2.4 Method of Payment**

All invoices for payment should be submitted to:

Detroit Regional Chamber Foundation

777 Woodward Ave, Ste 800

Detroit, MI 482226

**OR**

[mschmidbauer@detroitchamber.com](mailto:mschmidbauer@detroitchamber.com)

### **2.5 Written Inquiries**

Written inquiries can also be sent via e-mail to [mschmidbauer@detroitchamber.com](mailto:mschmidbauer@detroitchamber.com) by the date specified in section 1.3. All written inquiries and their responses will be made available to all bidders upon their request.

### **3.0 Technical Specifications**

#### **3.1 Scope of Work**

3.1.1. The selected vendor will be expected to complete the following tasks:

##### **A. Data Collection and Management**

- Utilize existing DATF student application data, including institutional type, collegiate level, race, gender, funding need and amount, and zip code.
- Track every applicant's persistence and graduation rates through the National Student Clearinghouse.
- Integrate new data collection methods to gather additional metric data, socioeconomic information, and qualitative insights from students.

##### **B. Data Expansion and Analysis**

- Identify and incorporate additional metric data, such as:
  - Semester completion rates
  - Semester-to-semester and fall-to-fall persistence rates
  - Grade Point Average (GPA)
  - Credit accumulation rates
  - Graduation and transfer rates
  - Repeat funding request patterns
- Collect and analyze socioeconomic variables, including:
  - Family and external income sources
  - Employment status
  - Student debt levels
  - Social support from family and campus networks
- Conduct qualitative research to assess:
  - Student emotional well-being and sense of belonging
  - The impact of funding on student commitment to graduation
  - Other financial support options explored by students and their adequacy

### **C. Comparative Analysis and Reporting**

- Compare grant recipient outcomes to students from similar demographic backgrounds.
- Provide a breakdown of trends and factors contributing to student success.
- Identify key barriers to persistence and completion.
- Offer actionable recommendations for improving grant impact and student support services.

### **D. Deliverables** The vendor will provide the following deliverables:

- **Project Work Plan:** A detailed outline of the research methodology, timeline, and data collection strategy.
- **Interim Data Reports:** Summary reports on initial findings, presented quarterly.
- **Final Report:** A comprehensive analysis, including key findings, comparative insights, and recommendations.
- **Presentation of Findings:** A final presentation to stakeholders summarizing research outcomes and actionable strategies.

### **3.2 Project Management**

Describe how the bidder will monitor timetables and deliverables or measurable standards for completion specified in the RFP.

## **4.0 Vendor Information**

### **4.1 Mandatory Requirements**

The bidder must be a Chamber member in good standing or be willing to join the Chamber upon receiving notice of project award. The bidder must also comply with all stated clauses in the master RFP.

### **4.2 Vendor Organization**

Describe your organizational structure and explain how your organization qualifies to be responsive to the requirements of this RFP.

#### **4.3 Key Staff Qualification and Experience**

Describe the qualifications and experience providing similar services or goods as required in this RFP for key staff who will be assigned to this project including the percentage of their time allocated to the project.

#### **4.4 References**

The bidder shall provide a minimum of three trade references including the names of persons who may be contacted, position of person, addresses, and phone numbers where similar products or services similar in scope to the requirements of the RFP have been provided.

#### **4.5 Diversity**

The Detroit Regional Chamber Foundation is interested in proposals from diverse suppliers, including small businesses and those owned by minorities, women, veterans, and other underrepresented groups. The bidder shall self-identify if they qualify as a diverse business.

### **5.0 Proposal Response Format**

#### **5.1 General**

One (1) electronic and/or one (1) hard copy of the proposal must be submitted by the due date listed in section 1.4 to the email and/or address from section 2.4 above. The proposal must be submitted in the following fashion. If the proposal is not submitted in the required format, the proposal will not be considered.

#### **5.2 Technical Response**

Proposals must respond to the RFP requirements in sections 3.0 and 4.0 of the RFP requirements by restating the number and text of the requirements in sequence and writing the response immediately after the requirement statement.

### **5.3 Cost Proposal**

This should contain all costs that would be billed to the Detroit Regional Chamber Foundation. If the method of payment in section 2.4 of the RFP is upon specific deliverables, detail out the costs for each item within the scope of work from section 3.1 of your technical response. The budget for this project is \$200,000.

## **6.0 Method of Evaluation and Award**

### **6.1 Evaluation Criteria**

The staff within the Detroit Regional Chamber Foundation's Education and Talent division will serve as the final evaluation team to review and select the proposal as recommended by Detroit Regional Chamber Foundation staff. The criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals for the purpose of ranking them in relative position based on how fully each proposal meets the requirements of this RFP.

| <b>Evaluation Criteria</b>   | <b>Points</b> |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| 4.1 Mandatory Requirements   | Pass or Fail  |
| 3.0 Technical Specifications | 40            |
| 4.0 Vendor Information       | 20            |
| 4.5 Diversity                | 5             |
| 5.3 Cost Proposal            | 35            |
| <b>Maximum Total Points</b>  | <b>100</b>    |

### **6.2 Discussions and Best and Final Offers**

The Detroit Regional Chamber Foundation may, at its sole option, either accept an initial proposal by award of a contract or enter into discussions with bidder(s) whose proposals are deemed to be reasonably susceptible of being considered for award. After discussions are concluded a bidder may be allowed to submit a "best and final offer."