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Dear John White,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this request on behalf of College Beyond. College Beyond's mission is to help New Orleans youth enroll and succeed in college. With proven results helping young people from low-income, minority, and first generation-to-college backgrounds enroll and succeed in college, we are delighted to submit this RFI in service of Louisiana's public schools, and particularly college and career counseling for youth from underrepresented backgrounds.

We know that students stumble at predictable moments in the college process: gaining access to schools with strong student supports, securing financial aid, navigating the maze of enrollment paperwork, and finding first year success. We believe that helping more youth enroll in college, access financial aid, avoid drop-out, and earn a post-secondary credential are keystone approaches toward better supporting the estimated 26,000 opportunity youth in the New Orleans area.

**Track Record of Student and School Outcomes**

College Beyond was incubated through New Orleans College Prep Academies from 2012-2016, serving three cohorts of students with strong results: on average, 96% of Cohen graduates completed the FAFSA (versus 42% citywide), 78% enrolled in college (57% citywide), and 66% re-enrolled for their second year (24% citywide). By identifying holes in the college pipeline and plugging them with trainings, FAFSA nights, text message reminders and drop-in enrollment supports, micro grants, and friendly, effective guides to coach students through the difficult first year of college, the pilot at Cohen has demonstrated that radically better outcomes are possible for students in New Orleans.

**Organization Model**

Having obtained 501(c)3 status this past fall, we have launched full operation for the 2016-2017 year by partnering with five local public high schools and two local colleges on a fee-for-service basis to provide for a seamless college transition for New Orleans public school graduates. We partner with high schools to train high school counselors on how to support students in the academic, social, and emotional preparation required for college access, in choosing strong campus fit, and in securing financial aid. We partner with colleges to provide direct coaching to students and data tracking to college and high school administrators.



Our model is designed for scale to meet our mission of serving every college-bound youth in New Orleans. We are grateful to the GPOA foundation for their generous support of our college access and persistence initiatives, through which we partner with the Cowen Institute and Stand for Children to help more New Orleans youth gain access to and succeed in college. We have found that counselors, if equipped with the right tools and support, can have a major impact on whether or not their students enroll and complete college.

Through this partnership, we have launched a college counselor training program for local counselors and convening college counseling and college persistence coalitions that are open to all practitioners in the city. More informally, we regularly collaborate with organizations like POSSE, College Track, Collegiate Academies, and KIPP Through College via a citywide network of college access and success professionals, and with the Louisiana Department of Education via its Financial Aid Working Group.

With funding and support from the Louisiana Department of Education, we could expand to serve all public high schools in our area through our college counselor training program and coalitions, supporting schools to increase financial aid applications, and successful college application, admission, enrollment, and persistence to degree or credential attainment.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this request and please do not hesitate to be in touch if any additional information would be helpful.

Sincerely,

Paris Woods  
Executive Director  
College Beyond | [www.collegebeyond.org](http://www.collegebeyond.org)