



Hawaii businesses struggle to fill vacancies during this period of historically low unemployment. Meanwhile secondary students wonder where the living wage jobs lie, what skills they need to develop as well as how to plan for life after high school. This, at a time when nearly three-quarters of all jobs in Hawaii will require some college or training after high school. So Hawaii faces a real labor disconnect between the skills and knowledge demanded by our economy and the talent produced by education and workforce training programs.

One solution lies with new ways to help students move from education into the workforce through smarter college to career pathways. At the [Harold K.L. Castle Foundation](#) (“Foundation”), we are encouraged by the promise of high schools that offer challenging academic core courses, a cluster of career and technical education courses and chances to apply learning in the real world.

This new approach to learning is what it will take to prepare students for post-secondary success, including entry into high growth or high need occupations. Key to this success equation are **work-based learning opportunities** such as internships, career fairs and job shadowing that breathe life into academic content while developing employability skills like problem solving and communication. But for students, these transformative experiences are typically hard to find and often disconnected from their interests.

The Foundation recently commissioned a [scan of the work-based learning landscape](#) in Hawaii. Our goal was to understand *what it will take to ensure every single student graduates from high school with a meaningful work-based learning experience?*

Success in regions like Kapaa and Waipahu reveal the promise of school/community partnerships. Stories like these remain the exception, however. Despite business leaders across the state that are eager to engage with high schools, partnerships that begin full of promise too often unravel in frustration.

New structures are needed if far more students are to benefit from work-based learning experiences. The missing ingredient is **dedicated support** that can facilitate and coordinate the school/business relationship while keeping track of success. The rest of this solicitation describes the resources available to expand this dedicated support in key regions of the state.

Request for Proposals

The Foundation is issuing a competitive request for proposals (hereafter, “RFP”) as part of a broader effort to help set low-income youth on a path to success, with college credits and

relevant career experiences. Specifically, Foundation staff will identify and select **up to three** regional entities (“Intermediaries”) to help far more high school students participate in meaningful work-based learning opportunities.

The Intermediary referred to in the RFP may be an individual, nonprofit-, for-profit or public-sector entity that intends to respond to the RFP. Note that possessing legal status as a 501(c)3 entity is not an absolute precondition for selection and individuals wishing to create a new entity may consider requesting these funds to accelerate that work.

Selected intermediaries may request up to three years of funding support. Please bear in mind as you customize your response to the RFP that the scope of work outlined in your proposal must be reasonable considering your proposed budget. In other words, please tailor your proposal to the budget resources that you need to complete the work.

The Foundation will evaluate all written responses alongside our partners in the Hawaii Department of Education and University of Hawaii and negotiate with those intermediaries deemed best positioned to provide exemplary services.

Desired Scope of Services

This RFP will enable an intermediary to manage or expand the regional partnership between high schools within one or two complex areas, and relevant partners from the postsecondary and business sectors. Respondents are free to define “regional” within these parameters.

Priority will be given to proposals that include high schools with well-defined career academy structures, strong postsecondary relationships and clear workplace opportunities within one or more high growth or high need economic sectors. Added priority will also be given to proposals that include significant matching funds that demonstrate the commitment of other funding partners as well as a thoughtful treatment for how these efforts will be sustained once grant funds are expended.

While, the specific extent and scope of each service is left up to the intermediary, please be sure that your proposal specifically addresses how funds will be used to support the following related but distinct activities over no more than a 36-month time period:

1. INITIAL PLANNING REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
 - a. Data review of high growth or high need industries within the geographic region
 - b. Interviews with participating high school principal(s), career academy coordinator(s), postsecondary liaison(s) and business partner(s) to identify a shared understanding of the current landscape

2. COORDINATE THE SCHOOL/BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT
 - a. Create, evaluate and maintain a framework for sustainable work-based learning across business, industry and community partnerships. This framework should include clear expectations of participation for the high school(s), postsecondary

and business partner(s). The framework should also identify how students will receive an increasingly significant set of learning experiences across grades 9-14 at a minimum that move the student from early career exposure to career exploration and eventual career immersion.

- b. Coordinate meetings of the high school career academy advisory boards
 - c. Recruit new business partners from high growth or high need industries
 - d. Identify the school or program that is the best fit for the proposed engagement, keeping in mind school needs, business partner preferences, academy themes, and ensuring equity of resources across participating high schools
 - e. Prepare both the school and business partner for the engagement
 - f. Coordinate relevant partnership activities within a framework of work-based learning. Based on school interest, these activities may include, but are not limited to, guest speakers, mentors, curricular advice, field trips, teacher externships, job shadowing, mock interviews, student internships, or service on an academy advisory board
 - g. Design and implement, in collaboration with appropriate partners, a comprehensive plan for building leadership capacity and delivering professional development for site administrators, teachers, and counselors committed to high quality work-based learning
3. MAINTAIN DATABASE ON SCHOOL/BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT
- a. Track investment of time and resources for participating business partners
 - b. Track student participation for school partner
4. CONDUCT MARKETING AND OUTREACH
- a. Produce assorted collateral on the mechanics and benefits of the specific school/business partnership
 - b. Publish annual progress reviews

Submittal Summary

We are most interested in your clear thinking which is why the proposal contains clear work limits. Submittals should include the following items:

- 1) A brief written description that lays out the overall approach to the project (750-word limit)
- 2) The expertise of the individual or team assembled to carry out the project, including a statement of qualifications based on any similar past projects undertaken in the past, to include at least one outside reference. This section should also consider if and how the project addresses the requested priorities.

- 3) A bulleted scope of work that identifies specific activities, milestones and deliverables within the desired scope of services (1000-word limit)
- 4) A project budget for up to 36 months, including how other sources of funding will be leveraged and how the intermediary plans to sustain these efforts. Intermediaries may request up to \$100,000 per year for no more than three years of support activity.
- 5) A clear definition of success that includes a bulleted list of expected project outcomes and impact (500-word limit)

All submittals will be reviewed by a selection committee and form the basis for subsequent contract negotiations. As such, the final budget and scope of services may be subject to further changes.

Timeline

- 1) Indicate interest to apply by November 3, 2017
- 2) Submit complete responses by November 17, 2017
- 3) Selection will be made by December 1, 2017
- 4) Planning phase will occur from January – April, 2018

Questions

Please direct any questions, interest to apply and/or the complete proposal to Alex Harris at aharris@castlefoundation.org. You may also schedule a one-on-one phone call prior to formally submitting your response should you wish to discuss strategic approaches or use of funds. In addition, you may request access to limited on-the-ground coaching and facilitation resources to help in the proposal planning process.