

Propelling Great  
Organizations  
to Become  
Even Better

**PropelNext** helps promising nonprofits boost their impact on young people's lives. PropelNext grantees receive significant funding along with peer support and coaching from expert advisors to build and implement performance and change management systems. With this capacity, they can take on ongoing cycles of learning, evaluation and improvement to transform their organizations and become stronger, more effective and resilient. As a result, the youth they serve can lead healthier, more productive lives.

#### Even the best youth organizations face overwhelming challenges

PropelNext grantees are well-established, highly regarded organizations. But, like almost all nonprofits, they struggle daily to achieve super-human goals with small staffs, lean infrastructure and technology insufficient to meet their needs. Chronic underinvestment in youth services by both government and private funders intensifies the challenges.

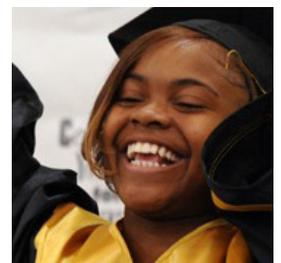
The young people these grantees work with face multiple challenges as well, from subpar schools to homelessness and shattered family structures. Youth organizations must juggle these critical concerns on a daily basis as they seek to identify the most effective ways to direct their time and resources in order to improve the odds for these young people. As a consequence, even experienced, talented

leaders at high-performing organizations often lack the resources and information to make the best decisions and deliver the most targeted and effective versions of their programs.

#### PropelNext offers a new strategy for organizational impact

Our approach is grounded in research, shaped by experience and rooted in each organization's strengths. Through a strategic financial investment along with dynamic coaching and group learning sessions, PropelNext assists organizations design and implement performance, evaluation and change management strategies that enable them to realize their bold goals for the future.

PropelNext grantees work with consultants and each other to refine and improve their program models based on both their own experiences and





## PropelNext Snapshot

**FIRST COHORT:**  
13 grantees in 10 states chosen from 82 invited applicants

Grantees receive customized consulting and coaching, group learning, and join an interactive online community

Three year initiative includes grants of \$400,000

**GOAL:** Better results through stronger programs, more resources for quality and expansion, and increased readiness for evaluation

evidence of what works. They build their capacity to collect and analyze data to fuel ongoing improvement, and rethink organizational practices and talent in order to achieve their goals.

Organizations are reinvigorated and refocused by the experience. They report that their cultures are changing to focus on learning and improvement. They find support for their efforts from a network of likeminded peers across the nation as part of the PropelNext community.

Some of the specific actions they have taken as a result of PropelNext include:

- REDESIGNING PROGRAMS and reorganizing staff to deliver higher quality services
- COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA to identify highly effective programs and practices in order to direct time, staff and resources to those areas
- USING DATA to recognize ineffective programs and practices so they can be improved or discontinued
- STANDARDIZING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION so that all young people in the program can rely upon the same high-quality services
- LAYING THE GROUNDWORK TO EVALUATE PROGRAMS and services, with the goal of using evaluation to strengthen the organization and to build support for it
- CREATING A CULTURE that values ongoing learning and improvement

PropelNext selects a group of 12-15 promising organizations working across the spectrum of youth development and possessing the following attributes:

- A PROMISING PROGRAM MODEL and track record
- A WILLINGNESS FOR CRITICAL SELF-EXAMINATION in pursuit of greater impact

- A POWERFUL VISION FOR THE FUTURE, coupled with a drive to achieve that vision
- STRONG LEADERSHIP and organizational capacity to undertake this work
- STABLE FINANCES

Over the course of three years, these organizations receive an injection of financial capital averaging \$400,000 and an equal investment in comprehensive learning opportunities that include:

- IN-PERSON GROUP SESSIONS to share and learn from colleagues
- INDIVIDUALIZED COACHING and technical assistance from experts in program design, performance management, and change management
- ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY TOOLS for data collection and analysis
- PARTICIPATION IN A SUPPORTIVE PEER NETWORK to share expertise and lessons learned through both face-to-face events and an online learning community

As an experimental pilot, PropelNext continues to learn from grantees how to strengthen its model and how to adapt it to diverse and evolving youth organizations.

Ultimately, PropelNext seeks to position organizations for greater impact measured, not just in numeric "outputs," but in lasting outcomes for youth and families. At the same time, PropelNext is exploring a different model for investing in nonprofits that we hope will inspire others and make it possible for organizations to improve young lives more effectively.

For more information, please contact Lissette Rodriguez, Managing Director of PropelNext, at [lrdriguez@emcf.org](mailto:lrdriguez@emcf.org).