



Think College National Coordinating Center

RE: Strategic Capacity Building Projects

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Project Application Draft

Contact:

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Abstract:

Lead Learn Live is a 501(c)(3) corporation that has the mission to bring 4-year college programs to Oklahoma for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) in order to increase self-determination, employment opportunities and fullness of life for young adults living with IDD.

For graduating high school students in Oklahoma who are living with mild to moderate IDD, and want to attend college, currently, there is a lack of supports at the collegiate level, that if provided, would allow for these students to continue their education and pursuit of their goals. After high school, many of these students are ending up underemployed – if employed at all, or in many instances living as a dependent with no constructive use of their skills. These individuals have much to offer society, but are often found living at home, disengaged from community.

There are college programs for these students currently in 48 states, but not yet in Oklahoma. The program we are working to begin follows a model proven successful in other states, such as REACH at College of Charleston and Beyond Academics at University of N.C. Greensboro.

The program we plan to begin includes the components of Independent Living, Social Skills, Academics, and Career Development, and is individualized per student. The program will be fully integrated into the college environment, and the students will be included in all aspects of campus life. Statistics show that there are definitive improved outcomes for students that complete these programs. This not only affects the quality of life for these individuals and their families, but also lessens the burden on the state when individuals require less support, and are able to contribute to society and engage in community.

Project Design Description:

Gap this project addresses:

There are no programs as described above for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities in Oklahoma. As such, our ability to begin a program would align with the TCNCC goals 1-4 as follows:

- 1) We have worked for the past 3+ years presenting at parent groups, conferences, meetings with state legislature (including interim session presentation), representatives of higher education and state regent staff to educate on the need for these programs. Recently, we worked to draft HR1065, which was passed by the Oklahoma State House of Representatives on 4/21/16, supporting collaboration and urging the development of these programs in Oklahoma. Our partial list of where we have presented is:
 - Oklahoma Transition Institute Conference – presented by Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
 - OK-AHEAD Conference – presented by Oklahoma Association on Higher Education and Disability
 - Oklahoma Autism Conference – presented by Oklahoma Autism Network
 - Down Syndrome Association of Tulsa – special interest presentation
 - Down Syndrome of Central Oklahoma – special interest presentation, Board of Directors presentation
 - Autism Center of Tulsa – special interest presentation
 - On The Road Conferences; Shawnee, Claremore, Tulsa, Muskogee, Collinsville – presented by Sooner Success
 - TARC (Tulsa Advocates for the Rights of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities) – special interest presentation
 - Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education – presentations at the following state meetings: Oklahoma Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Council on Student Affairs, Council on Instruction
 - Meetings with Oklahoma House of Representatives members
 - Meetings with representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation, DD Council, Oklahoma Family Network, and other state agencies
 - Interim Session presentation – Oklahoma House of Representatives
 - Alpha Xi Delta Philanthropy Presentation
 - School District Transition Fairs
 - Multiple Parent Support Groups across the state
- 2) We would increase Think College presence in this geographic region by being the first quality program as described in the abstract paragraph, in Oklahoma.
- 3) We plan to implement a quality program modeled after REACH at College of Charleston, Beyond Academics at UNCG and similar.
- 4) Our main outcome initiatives for the students completing these programs is improvement in their ability to live independently and have meaningful employment.

Scope of work:

Our current focus is raising the needed start-up funding that Oklahoma IHE's require to start our model 4-year program, which is \$375,000. We would use a \$25,000 award, to fund my time as Director of Lead Learn Live to continue awareness and fundraising in order to reach our goal of \$375,000. This amount will allow for a selected IHE to begin a program and provide 4 years of start-up funding. After year 4 of the grant award, the program will be self-funding. We are continuing to meet with parents, agency representatives, state regent representatives and representatives of colleges/universities to keep momentum going for this project. As a result of meeting with potential funders, we are actually broadening the number of people educated on the need for, and lack of, this program model in Oklahoma.

Our Scope of Work once we secure the funding includes:

Conduct a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process to select the college/university that will begin the model program. After selecting the successful college/university, we will allocate funding to begin the program. We will provide the successful college/university with resource information, connections with nationally known experts, local education agencies (LEA's), and other contacts that will support the college as they begin the program. We will also gather data and create metrics regarding the program as it progresses.

The activities involved include:

- 1) **Release RFP** – The Oklahoma State Department of Regents has volunteered to release the RFP through their office, which gives additional support and encouragement to IHEs to participate in the process.
- 2) **Hold an information meeting for interested colleges** explaining the Request for Proposal (RFP) process and requirements. This meeting will include nationally recognized experts.
- 3) Answer questions during the proposal process
- 4) Receive RFPs, disseminate them to Task Force that will score them, tally information for review
- 5) Select successful IHE and Award Grant
- 6) Work with successful IHE to implement the program by providing startup funding, sharing information for implementation, providing resource network, gathering and providing data, and assisting with publicity.

Timeline:

Approx.

Funding in Place: (Our goal is \$160,000 in place by July)		July 21, 2017
Planning: schedule national speakers' participation and release of RFP:	8 weeks:	Sept. 15, 2017
Duration allowed for interested universities to develop their proposals:	9 weeks:	Nov. 20, 2017
Award of selected college/university:		Dec. 20, 2017
Personnel Search to fill the Executive Director position:	10 weeks:	Mar. 9, 2018
Program Preparation/hiring administrative assistant/select 1st cohort:	20 weeks:	July 27, 2018
Begin Program:		August 2018

Anticipated Project Outcomes:

- 1) **Employment:** Desired outcome – significant increase in employment from state and national averages. Employment at 71% or above.
- 2) **Living Independently:** Desired outcome – significant increase in independent living from state and national averages: Living independently at a rate of 75% or above.
- 3) **Community Engagement:** Desired outcome – significant increase in community engagement from state and national averages: Community Engagement at a rate of 75% or above.
- 4) **Reduction of Federal or State assistance:** Desired outcome – reduction in the amount of federal or state assistance required from program graduates.

Partnership with Key Stakeholders:

Our state agency partner is Sooner SUCCESS. Sooner SUCCESS is a program in the Child Study Center at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in the Section of Developmental/Behavioral Pediatrics. Sooner

SUCCESS works intimately with both the public and private sectors with the overarching goal to promote a comprehensive, coordinated system of health, social and educational services for Oklahoma children and youth with special healthcare needs in their local community. Unique in its approach, Sooner SUCCESS addresses barriers by promoting community capacity integration and seamless infrastructure spread in county, regional and state levels. Sooner SUCCESS achieves this through a service delivery model focused on care navigation and coordination, continuity of care and care transition. Sooner SUCCESS has a large reach into the community of students with disabilities and can further the education and awareness process through events that they do on a regular basis as well as facilitate meetings between other state agencies for awareness and education.

We have Owasso School District as our Local Education Agency, which will engage with the selected university to educate families about the program and engage with the selected university to schedule site visits for potential students. In addition, we will have the involvement of the Department of Rehabilitation Services, to be engaged with the program students particularly in support of their chosen career path as they graduate from the program. We will also have engagement with the Oklahoma State Dept. of Regents for oversight of the process with the awarded IHE.

Evaluation Plan:

Our evaluation plan will include:

- Regularly scheduled meetings with the program director at the selected IHE, as well as university personnel.
- Access to documentation regarding program participants.
- Development of standardized reporting forms.
- Input and summarization of data.

We are pleased to have great relationships developed over the past 4 years, with Dr. Meg Grigal, Co-Director of Think College – the national reporting center for post-secondary programs; Donald Bailey, Executive Director of College Transition Connection – the non-profit he founded that began 5 programs in South Carolina and Edie Cusack, Executive Director of College of Charleston’s REACH program – the primary program we are modeling most of our components after. These individuals have the experience, processes and formats that they have offered to share with Lead Learn Live in order to correctly summarize and interpret relevant data. We believe in following a very successful model in all aspects of this endeavor, and these experts have the tools to help us collect, summarize and interpret data with excellence and meet a large TCNCC goal of filling the “hole” in the Think College map showing no programs in Oklahoma! In addition, we have an excellent relationship with the Vice Chancellor with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The Vice Chancellor has offered her insight to sharing with us what information will be helpful to know from a state regent perspective as well in order to encourage more programs to begin.

Our plan and timeline to get the desired evaluation information includes:

Data will be collected and summarized mid semester and at semester end. In addition, a summary will be prepared combining first and second semester information for a year-end report.

Timeline:

Program Begins: August 2018
 Mid Semester 1 Data collection: October 2018
 End of Semester 1 Data collection: January 2019
 Mid Semester 2 Data collection: March 2019
 End of Semester 2 Data collection: June 2019
 Year Summary: July 2019

Sustainability Plan:

The model we are using is a self-sustaining model program. We are well aware of the budget issues Oklahoma has regarding education. The input we have had from IHE's as well as State Regents has been that the program needs to be self-sustaining. We need a total of \$375,000 distributed over 4 years as start-up funding. This funding will support the staff needed to begin a program along with the other necessary expenses and will allow the full student count to build to the self-sustaining number of a conservative total of 20 program students on campus beginning the 5th year of operation. After that time, the inflow of tuition and Program fee will support the program. We have based our financial model on successful programs as well as current in state tuition and fee costs for regional universities. In other words, we built our financial model on a very conservative basis. After the 4-year start-up funding, the project is self-sustaining.

Budget Justification:

Operations/Administration: 12% of total \$375,000 per program; \$45,000 over the 4 year administration period.

\$22,500 would be used to support the operations/administration of the program for the first 2 years.

An additional \$2,500 would be used to bring in the speakers and go toward their expenses for the RFP information meeting.

<u>Breakdown of Administration:</u>	<u>Per Yr.</u>	<u>Per 2 Yr. Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Exec. Director Compensation:	\$7,627.50	\$15,255	8.1%
Gen'l Overhead:			
Legal, Consultants, Accounting	\$1,125.00	\$2,250	1.2%
Prof. Development/Travel			
PDV/Out of state conf/\$600; 4 trips to OK schools/\$40 each	\$760	\$1,520	0.8%
Prof. Supplies			
Computer, Printer, Supplies Marketing, Awareness Materials	\$437.5	\$875.00	0.5%
Event Support:			
1 per yr. Tulsa/OKC 2 day event 1 speaker	\$1,300	\$2,600	1.4%
1 time RFP informational event	\$11,250.0	<u>\$22,500</u> <u>\$2,500</u>	12.00%
		\$25,000	

In Summary:

\$25,000 would bring us closer to our goal to begin a program which allows us to continue sharing the message of what these programs are, and what they can do for these students. In addition, receiving funding from Think College would provide an important invested partner in this effort, which is meaningful to the funders we are approaching. Supporting Lead Learn Live directly aligns with Think College's long term goals:

- 1) Lead Learn Live will continue to promote the need as well as raise awareness that quality programs make a life changing difference for these valuable individuals, giving them a happier life. For instance, I feel it's important to go to the State of the Art conference to stay up on leading trends, etc. I have only been able to go once, and that was 3 years ago. If I was able to go to that conference, I would bring back that information and disseminate what I learned by speaking at state conferences, or otherwise sharing the information, so the knowledge would grow. **TCNCC Goal 1.**
- 2) Oklahoma would have a quality program. Not an unknown program, not a partial program, but a program that has been worked towards since 2012, with nationally known experts behind it, state regent staff supporting it, and on it goes. I would like to see this program begin on schedule in 2018 as the first in OK in order to set a standard. **TCNCC Goal 2.**
- 3) A quality program will allow for an initiative that is not only better, it actually would create a choice not currently available in Oklahoma by increasing the Think College presence in this geographic region. **TCNCC Goal 3.**
- 4) When these students come out of this quality program – they will have greater participation with competitive integrated employment, community membership and independent living. **TCNCC Goal 4.**
- 5) When Oklahoma has a quality program going, possible future funding by TCNCC and others would allow me to continue in this role even after the start up time frame is over, serving as a potential coordinator for these programs as an extension of Think College in some capacity for Oklahoma. **TCNCC Goal 5.**