

**College Possible: Closing the Achievement Gap for Low-Income Students**

College Possible, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, in collaboration with 19 low-performing high schools located in Philadelphia, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Milwaukee, Omaha and Portland proposes to accelerate the improved performance of high need students, addressing Priority 2 Improving Low-Performing Schools, subpart b) Implementing programs that improve students' non-cognitive abilities. We seek a \$3,000,000 development grant to serve 6650 students through our innovative, substantially more effective and scalable model for improving student achievement.

Founded in 2000, College Possible makes college admission and success possible for low-income students through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support. We take a unique approach by utilizing proven strategies in an innovative manner. Our program places full-time AmeriCorps service members in schools to provide near-peer mentoring for a cohort of high need students. Coaches utilize a data-driven structure focused on college success that provides academic support along with opportunities to practice and develop non-cognitive skills. The cohort model creates a community of peer support and expectation of college achievement.

Project goals are for students to 1) increase non-cognitive skills as measured through developmental assets such as achievement motivation and school engagement; and 2) improve achievement as measured through increased high school graduation rates, college enrollment and completion rates – ultimately closing the education gap between low-income students and their higher-income peers. Additionally, following a well-developed logic model, the project will conduct a mixed method implementation study with a goal to 3) evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of key model components including near-peer coaching and college-focused peer groups, helping to build an evidence base and add to the body of research supporting “what works.”