

## ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT ABACUS

### ***What is included when you say "post-secondary" education?***

College, university and the skilled trades.

### ***The call for proposal does not explicitly identify LGBTQ youth as a sub-population. Would this audience be considered for ABACUS granting?***

Any sub-population that is marginalized or challenged is of particular interest for ABACUS granting. The proposed project should address these youth in Grades 6, 7, 8 and transition to Grade 9.

### ***Would HCF fund a project for middle school students who need support but who are not clearly seen as disadvantaged?***

The focus of this program is on students who are disadvantaged. There are many disadvantages/barriers that students can face, which are not necessarily related to income or geography. It is the proponent's responsibility to establish how this group is disadvantaged and therefore a candidate for ABACUS funding.

### ***Does "transition to Grade 9" mean you will fund programs in Grade 9?***

A Grade 9 program that carries over as the final year of a Grade 6, 7 and 8 program would be considered, as would a Grade 9 program that explicitly supports students' transition to high school. A standalone Grade 9 program (e.g. Grade 9 reading club) would not likely be considered.

### ***Will you fund a program that includes middle-school years but extends beyond middle-school – for instance Grade 4 to 8?***

If funded, the portion would be that pertaining to Grades 6 to 8.

### ***Are there parameters on experiential work/learning?***

The only parameters are that the overall project must fit with ABACUS criteria as described in the call for proposals.

### ***When do the programs have to start? Could they start in September rather than January?***

The programs could start anytime that makes sense.

**Would you consider programs that strictly support parent engagement?**

If the proposed program supports the overall goals of ABACUS – middle school years, target audience etc. HCF would consider. In addition, we encourage parent engagement as a component of an ABACUS application. In our research, nobody yet has identified a great model for parent engagement – so the Foundation would definitely like to see some work in this area.

**What are the current post-secondary access rates in Hamilton?**

Following are the statistics available.

**Educational Attainment, Quick Facts**

<b>Hamiltonians, Working Age: 25-64</b>		
	<b>Percentage of Population</b>	
<b>Highest Degree Completed</b>	<b>2006*</b>	<b>2011†</b>
No degree	15.7%	13.0%
High School Diploma	26.2%	25.3%
Apprenticeship	10.4%	9.4%
College	24.0%	26.0%
University Less than Degree	3.7%	3.9%
University Degree	19.9%	22.4%
<b>Hamiltonians, Ages 25-34</b>		
<b>Highest Degree Completed</b>	<b>2006*</b>	
No degree	10.1%	
High School Diploma	25.7%	
Apprenticeship	7.8%	
College	27.2%	
University Less than Degree	3.7%	
University Degree	25.4%	

\*Statistics Canada, 2006 Census Community Profiles

†2011 National Household Survey

The [Working Together](#) report from the City of Hamilton’s Labour Market Action Partnership also provides data from some specific neighbourhoods and is a useful resource on post-secondary access.

**Can a charity partner with a non-charity?**

While HCF is only permitted to grant to a registered Canadian charity, not-for-profit organizations without charitable status may be sponsored by a registered charity. The details are provided on the HCF website at

<http://hamiltoncommunityfoundation.ca/grants/charitable-sponsorship-rules/>

***Can the charitable organization we partner with be domiciled outside of Hamilton, for example, in Toronto or Ottawa?***

Yes, though a very strong rationale would have to be provided as to why a Hamilton-based organization could not act as your fiscal sponsor. The sponsoring organization would have to have a local presence, and would have to be integrated into the Hamilton education network. Please note that ALL work has to be undertaken in Hamilton and serve a Hamilton audience.

***How will the letters of intent be evaluated?***

In a nutshell, there are three parts to the evaluation. First the letters must meet some core criteria to be evaluated any further:

- Fits with ABACUS' overall goal
- Address the needs of identified target populations
- Address at least one of the four pillars

Second they will be evaluated on criteria which are laid out in more detail in the call for proposal:

- Potential for impact on participants' lives
- Organization's capacity to undertake work
- Solid project plan, based on identified need
- Planning and commitment to evaluation
- Realistic budget
- Systems thinking and collaboration with other organizations

Finally, as outlined in the model, through ABACUS HCF is especially interested in encouraging projects that:

- address more than one of the four pillars
- remove barriers and serve underserved populations who are not being served elsewhere
- are innovative, especially in creating a more coordinated and integrated system
- engage parents

***Will you be sharing who received ABACUS grants so that grantees can work together if possible?***

It is our practice to post the recipients of any open call grant rounds along with brief project descriptions, immediately following the boards' approval of the grants. We expect these grants to be approved in December.

However, the ABACUS vision is to create a more co-ordinated and integrated system that will better serve students in the middle-school years. In that regard, the Foundation is encouraging new partnerships and collaboration to be evident in the proposals received.

***With respect to program evaluation – did you find any research on programs that are not necessarily academic (e.g. life skills etc.) that you might expect to lead to higher rates of graduation?***

The characteristics of programs that lead to post-secondary access were examined in building ABACUS, and informed the four pillars that are at its core. However, these programs were largely high school programs where measuring post-secondary access was easier. ABACUS programs start earlier, therefore it is likely we will also look at evaluation that includes indicators that are good predictors of post-secondary access – for instance attendance, credit accumulation in Grade 9.

With respect to outside measures and other evaluation discussion, it may be helpful to review the background on [early intervention programs](#) on the HCF website.

***How much will evaluation affect scope of project. How small an intervention would you consider?***

HCF is looking for quality program that makes a difference where there is a need in the target audience. The proposals will be evaluated on an understanding of the community and the effectiveness of intervention.

***Will HCF provide technical assistance with evaluation?***

We anticipate that we will be providing opportunities for recipient organizations to connect with each other and with HCF specifically on ABACUS evaluation. We will be connecting with the grant recipients specifically as these plans come into place.

***How much of a budget should we build in for evaluation?***

The general guideline of 10 percent is a good one.

***How does multi-year funding work? Where does the \$60,000 cap fit in?***

In some circumstances HCF would consider funding up to \$60,000 per year for three years – for instance, projects that are developmental, that follow the middle school cohort or have a sustainability model built in. As with any multi-year funding, subsequent years' funding are always dependent on evaluation and reporting each year, in which the recipient would be expected to demonstrate how they met reasonable and pre-established benchmarks.

***Will funded projects be evaluated for sustainability after three years?***

Sparking innovation and creativity to serve the middle-school population is an important goal for ABACUS, but certainly sustainability is also an important criterion.

***If our program makes a difference will HCF fund it after three years?***

While the Foundation is not in a position to fund projects indefinitely, there are other funders who do. Part of what we do is to seek out other funders (private foundations for instance) who may be interested in long-term funding.

In addition, one of ABACUS components is to look at systems-wide change. There may be opportunities to bring on public-sector funding. This is what happened with the NYA:WEH program for Aboriginal students.

***Will the Foundation fund renewals of grants already funded or only new initiatives?***

We are looking at all proposals that fit with the goals of ABACUS.

***We don't fit with this call. Are there still other opportunities for grants from HCF?***

We encourage you to monitor our other open calls (for example, the Edith H. Turner Foundation Fund) as these may provide funding opportunities. HCF also has a number of donor-advised and other funds of specific interest. If you have a great idea we would be happy to receive it as there may be other funds with which it is a fit.