

Working Group Facilitators: Request for Letters of Interest

Overview

Beginning in May 2017, Read by 4th is seeking strategic partners to convene and facilitate the work of five of the Campaign's working groups: 1) Early Learning, 2) Attendance, 3) Summer and Out-of-School Time, 4) Home Libraries, and 5) Reading Block Captains. These partners will work closely with Read by 4th campaign staff to ensure the work of these working groups remains aligned to the overall campaign goals and objectives as well as to the efforts of the other working groups.

Organizations selected to serve as Facilitators will receive a \$15,000 grant from the Read by 4th campaign as a contribution towards staff time expenses. It is assumed that organizations already doing significant work in one of the working group areas, ideally with staff for which the role described below is a natural extension of their existing work, will make the strongest candidates for this new campaign role. The grant amount was arrived at by thinking of the costs as 20% of a \$75,000 annual salary.

Facilitators will serve in this role for one year, beginning with a transition period for onboarding and planning in May 2017. At that point, the campaign intends to continue convening groups in this manner, making adjustments as-needed to reflect lessons learned from the first year of this approach.

Responsibilities

The selected strategic partner will:

- Convene each working group according to an agreed-upon regular schedule (i.e. every 4-6 weeks)
- Develop agendas and pre-materials for each meeting
- Document conversations and distribute notes
- Facilitate the updating and/or development of a work plan and associated annual benchmarks
- Manage the group's work plan
- Report to the campaign staff at regular intervals on progress
- Participate actively in other campaign meetings as requested (Partner Network and Advisory Council meetings to be determined)

In its role as managing partner, the Read by 4th campaign staff will provide the following:

- Initial on-boarding to debrief the working group's existing goals, work plans, and structure
- Ongoing participation and support to ensure the group's work aligns with the overarching goals of the campaign and to promote coordination between working groups as appropriate
- Access to campaign resources, including communications strategies and materials, website and partner portal, and evaluation plan and capacity to track and report on progress

Background

At the Read by 4th Mayoral Roundtable in February, the campaign introduced six “bold ideas” to guide the next phase of work. These ideas build on the campaign’s past efforts to set an ambitious vision, that when fully realized, would create the systemic change needed to not only meet the campaign’s goal of doubling the number of 3rd graders reading on grade level, but ensure that these changes could be sustained long-term.

These bold ideas include:

- 1) **Every grown-up embraces life’s teachable moments in a city of learning landscapes** – providing families with young children with tips on how everyday interactions can become brain-building moments, along with incorporating these tips and prompts into the physical environment in places like grocery stores, barbershops, laundromats, and other places where families spend time together
- 2) **Every new teacher enters the classroom ready to teach reading** – partnering with teacher preparation programs to ensure prospective teachers receive the specialized training needed to meet the needs of struggling readers
- 3) **Every family makes perfect school attendance a weekly goal** – communications campaign to raise awareness of the importance of daily, on-time attendance
- 4) **Every child has a personal home library** – aligning book distribution efforts to maximize impact
- 5) **Every child has access to free tutoring in their neighborhood** – increasing access to free, quality tutoring
- 6) **Every block has a reading hero** – inspired by the existing block captain concept, an army of volunteers equipped with key information to share with their neighbors, such as when/how to register for kindergarten and where to find support for struggling readers

Each of the campaign’s working groups will play a critical role in advancing these ideas. Most of these ideas fit naturally into existing working groups, but two cross topic areas in such a way that they are best addressed through new groups. Working groups will lead the tactical aspects of making these ideas real, in addition to continuing to advance their existing initiatives.

As a result, the Campaign will now have six standing working groups:

- 1) **Early Learning** – The overarching goal of the Early Learning working group is to increase the numbers of children entering kindergarten school-ready. Current work includes developing a common definition of school-readiness that can be used in city-wide messaging and a shared measure of school-readiness that can be used to track progress over time. This group will also address Bold Idea #1, which will include developing a citywide, systemic strategy for providing families with tips for building early language skills using tools such as Ready Rosie and Vroom.
- 2) **Instructional Strategies** – The Instructional Strategies group works to ensure classroom teachers are equipped with the preparation, support, and resources they need to teach reading. This group will also lead the teacher pipeline work behind Bold Idea #2. **Note:** Read by 4th staff will continue to facilitate this working group.
- 3) **Attendance** – The Attendance working group is dedicated to decreasing absenteeism and tardiness to ensure that children are present for classroom instruction. Recent work has included a community ambassadors pilot that engages parent volunteers in supporting attendance and ongoing efforts to identify and address attendance barriers. This group will also lead Bold #3, a citywide messaging campaign to raise awareness of the importance of attendance.

- 4) **Summer and Out-of-School-Time (OST)** – The goals of the Summer and OST working group are to prevent summer learning loss and maximize out-of-school-time learning opportunities. Priorities have included coordinating the annual “Read and Rise” initiative to embed literacy into 100+ summer camps, as well as work to expand and align other summer reading opportunities such as one week camps, summer meal sites, and book distributions. Going forward, this group will also lead efforts around Bold Idea #5, to increase access to free, quality tutoring.
- 5) **NEW: Home Libraries** – This new working group will lead Bold Idea #4, to increase access to books in children’s homes. An early priority will be to document the scope of existing book distribution efforts to understand what’s already working well as well as gaps that may be addressed going forward.
- 6) **NEW: Reading Block Captains** – The second new working group will drive Bold Idea #6, to create a cadre of on-the-ground volunteers prepared to share key information with their neighbors. Early work will likely include coming to consensus around what 5-10 pieces of information are most critical for the volunteers to promote, identifying neighborhood(s) for early implementation, and developing the infrastructure to recruit, train, and support volunteers.

Letter of Interest

If your organization is interested in facilitating one of these working groups, please submit a letter of interest to Jenny Bogoni at bogonij@freelibrary.org by Friday, April 21, 2017. In your response, please briefly address questions 1-3, plus one of the remaining three questions.

Required:

1. Which working group(s) is your organization interested in leading, and why?
2. Who specifically from your organization would act as the group’s facilitator? What is his/her role at your organization? How would facilitating this group build on or relate to his/her existing responsibilities? Please also indicate if others from your organization would be involved as well.
3. What would success for this working group look like one year from now?

Choose one:

4. If you have already been part of this working group, what ideas do you have for how it might evolve and improve going forward? For example, are there other voices or organizations that should be included? Or suggested changes to the meeting structure and format?
5. If you have not participated in this working group to date, describe how you would manage the transition of leadership and development of relationships with existing working group members.
6. If it is a new working group (home libraries or reading heroes), please describe how you would approach the first three months of the work, including who you see as being key participants in this working group.

Facilitators will be selected by campaign staff in consultation with the Read by 4th Advisory Council and will be notified by Monday, May 1, 2017.