

## FREE RESOURCE · PATHWAY 03 / PARTNER ON A GRANT

# Boilerplate grant text

External evaluation partner: Higher Learning Lab

---

The block on the following pages is approximately 500 words and is designed to be inserted into the Evaluation, Methods, or Partner Capacity section of a federal or foundation grant proposal. It positions Higher Learning Lab as the named external evaluator, using a mixed-methods program evaluation approach. Language is third-person and review-panel-friendly.

**Suggested use:** Copy into the proposal text, then localize the [bracketed] terms and the population descriptor in paragraph two.

## External Evaluation Partner: Higher Learning Lab

The proposed program will be externally evaluated by Higher Learning Lab (HiLL), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (EIN 99-2223618) that conducts applied research, program evaluation, and technical assistance for institutions serving vulnerable students in K–12 and higher education. HLL is led by Genevive Bjorn, Ed.D. (Johns Hopkins University), whose published scholarship includes *Critical Reading of the Research Literature: Introducing the CERIC Method* (Cambridge University Press, 2026) and more than five years of mixed methods research and evaluation work across postsecondary student success, foster youth educational continuity, and international student support initiatives. HLL’s role on this project is to serve as the independent, methodologically rigorous evaluator across the full life of the [project period] award.

HiLL will employ a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design appropriate to a program serving [target population]. The quantitative strand will draw on institutional administrative records (enrollment, course-taking, financial aid disbursement, advising contact, and disaggregated outcome data), supplemented by validated participant-reported instruments selected or adapted to ensure measurement validity within the target population. The qualitative strand will consist of semi-structured interviews with program participants and key institutional informants, supplemented by document review and, where appropriate, observation of program activities. Sequential integration of strands will surface friction points and program mechanisms that administrative data alone do not reveal—a structure HiLL has used successfully to identify actionable institutional change in prior projects.

The evaluation will be IRB-approved through a cooperating institution. All instruments, sampling frames, and analytic procedures will be documented in a pre-registered evaluation plan delivered within ninety (90) days of award. HiLL will produce three categories of deliverables across the project period: (1) an annual formative evaluation memo for the project team summarizing emerging findings and

implementation feedback while the project is still in flight; (2) a final summative report formatted for the funder's reporting requirements, including the outcomes language standard to [funder agency]; and (3) at least one publication-quality manuscript section co-authored with the project PI, suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed venue.

HiLL brings particular expertise to research with the populations served by this project, including foster-affiliated students, first-generation college students, and international students in English-medium universities. HiLL's free public resource library at [higherlearninglab.org](https://higherlearninglab.org) documents the methodological and substantive foundations of this work and is updated regularly. Co-authored findings from this evaluation will be added to that public library under a Creative Commons license, extending the public benefit of the award beyond the funded period.

Total budgeted evaluator time: [X]% effort for the PI of evaluation across [Y] project years, plus [Z] graduate research assistant hours. A detailed evaluation budget narrative is included in [Appendix \_\_].

---

#### **CONTACT · TO START A CONVERSATION**

Genevive Bjorn, Ed.D. · Founder and Executive Director, Higher Learning Lab  
[contact@higherlearninglab.org](mailto:contact@higherlearninglab.org) · [higherlearninglab.org/contact](https://higherlearninglab.org/contact)