



## Letter of Inquiry

### Organization Information

**Grant ID:** I2015-0290

**Legal Name of Organization:** Steppingstone Foundation, Inc.

**Grant Type:** Project Support

**EIN Number:** 04-3086666

**NTEE Code:** Education

**Amount Requested from the Boston Foundation:** \$100,000.00

**Project Budget:** \$201,608.00

**Project Duration:** to

**Project Title, if applicable:** SIF Application

**Month Fiscal Year Begins:**

**Member of the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network:**

Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenses
Last Fiscal Year (actuals)	5672568.00	5027844.00
Current Fiscal Year (budget)	5455526.00	5397690.00
Next Fiscal Year (projected)	5812994.00	5705966.00

### **Organization Address:**

155 Federal Street  
Suite 800  
Boston, MA 02110

### **Organization Description:**

Founded in 1990, The Steppingstone Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that develops and implements programs that prepare underserved students for educational opportunities that lead to college success. Based on the premise that, regardless of circumstance, students can achieve at high levels academically with effective preparation and support, Steppingstone programs emphasize rigorous standards and achieve meaningful results. Steppingstone's overall long-term goal is to increase the number of Boston schoolchildren enrolling at four-year colleges with the skills they need to succeed and ultimately earn their degree. Each year, Steppingstone serves approximately 1,600 Boston students from grade five through college with its two academic programs, The Steppingstone Academy and the College Success Academy. Steppingstone also created the National Partnership for Educational Access, a membership organization to improve college graduation rates by facilitating collaboration and the sharing of best practices among college access programs nationwide.

**Organization's Main Phone Number:** 6174236300



**Organization's Main FAX Number:** 6174236303

**Organization's Website:** <http://www.tsf.org>

**Year Founded:** 1990

**Total Number of Board Members:** 25

**Number of Full Time Equivalent Staff:** 46.61

**Is there any open or pending litigation against your organization outside the normal course of business?** N

**Description of Litigation:**

### **Contact Information**

**Head of Organization:**

Ms. Kelly Glew, President and COO  
6174236300 222  
[kellyglew@tsf.org](mailto:kellyglew@tsf.org)

**Contact Person:**

Ms. Gale S. Druga, Dir Foundation/Corp Rel.  
6174236300 249  
[gdruga@tsf.org](mailto:gdruga@tsf.org)

## OUTCOMES CHART

*This Outcomes Chart and the goals articulated here will serve as the basis of the annual reports that track progress on the goals of your grant. We consider your first submission of this Outcomes Chart to be a DRAFT. It will be the basis of dialog with your program officer who will help you revise it to reflect Long Term Goals that both your organization and TBF agree are ambitious, achievable and meaningful. The final version will be the basis of your award. With the agreement of your program officer, it may be updated prior to subsequent payments of multi-year awards.*

*Please note any areas in which you currently do not have the data to assess progress. Measures may be numerical (25 people served) or narrative (partnership agreement finalized). You may expand the size of the cells. Use NOTES to explain any changes in plans or activities.*

Agency: **The Steppingstone Foundation**

Program/Project Title: College Coaching – Boston Coaching to Completion Initiative/Year 1

Grant #:

Grant Period: 4/2015 – 3/2016

TBF Strategy:

Report Date:

	<b>Long Term Goals</b> <i>What long term results do you want to achieve at the end of the grant period?</i>	<b>Activities</b> <i>What are your plans or activities (program delivery and/or organizational capacity building) to achieve these goals?</i>	<b>Indicators</b> <i>What will you measure?</i>	<b>Baseline</b> <i>What is the current status of the activity?</i>	<b>Desired Results</b> <i>What short term results do you want to see at the end of this grant year?</i>	<b>Results as of Report Date</b> <i>What results did you achieve this year?</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>Transition Goal:</b> Steppingstone's BPS graduates will apply to and enroll in a 4-year college, or will enroll in a two-year college or another credit earning, post-secondary program to earn a credential or as a first step to eventual entry into a 4-year degree program.	1. Steppingstone will provide BPS seniors who plan to enroll in a post-secondary program with college readiness services to facilitate enrollment including: assistance with applications, financial aid advising, college tours, workshops, and introductions to campus life/college opportunities through Steppingstone's Summer Bridge Program	% and # of Steppingstone's BPS graduates enrolling in post-secondary programs <i>(Steppingstone's 2015 BosC4C cohort)</i>  % and # of Steppingstone's 2015 cohort attending the Summer Bridge	95% (80 estimated) of Steppingstone 2014 BPS graduates enrolled in post-secondary programs  9% (8) of Steppingstone 2014 BPS graduates attended the	95% (80 estimated) of all Steppingstone 2015 BPS graduates <i>(Steppingstone's 2015 BosC4C cohort)</i> will enroll in post-secondary programs  50% (approx. 40) of 2015 cohort will attend the Summer Bridge	

			<p>Program</p> <p>% and # of Steppingstone's 2015 cohort completing FAFSA applications</p> <p>% and # of Steppingstone's 2015 cohort attending student/family meetings on the financial commitments of college</p> <p>% and # of Steppingstone's 2015 cohort who enroll in a post-secondary program and are assigned a college coach</p>	<p>Summer Bridge program</p> <p>93% (115) of all Steppingstone Academy 2014 high school graduates<sup>1</sup> completed FAFSA applications</p> <p>54% (67) of all Steppingstone Academy 2014 high school graduates and their families attended financial advising</p> <p>100% (80) of Steppingstone 2014 BPS graduates who enrolled in a post-secondary program were assigned a college services intern advisor</p>	<p>program</p> <p>100% (80) of 2015 cohort to complete FAFSA applications</p> <p>60% (48) of 2015 cohort and their families will attend financial advising</p> <p>100% (80 estimated) of 2015 cohort assigned a college coach</p>	
		<p>2. Steppingstone's support services advisor will provide Steppingstone's 2015 BosC4C cohort with college readiness services and social/emotional support throughout the college enrollment process and transition their advising relationships to the</p>				

		college coach upon high school graduation		100% of Steppingstone 2014 BPS graduates were contacted by the college services intern advisor	100% (80 estimated) of 2015 cohort in contact with college coach the summer before college enrollment	
2	<b>Academic Progress Goal:</b> Members of Steppingstone's 2015 BosC4C cohort will complete their first year of post-secondary education demonstrating academic progress	<p>1. Steppingstone's college coach will complete Steppingstone's Freshman Check-In with each enrolled student, including the completion of the College Freshman Advisor Check-in inventory and an academic course plan</p> <p>2. Steppingstone's college coach will maintain contact with students through in-person visits, phone, email, and texts during their first year in a post-secondary program</p>	<p>Completion of Freshman Check-In inventories/plans and meetings.</p> <p>% and # of Steppingstone's 2015 cohort with full-time credit accumulation by the end of the first year</p> <p>% of 2015 cohort contacted by college coach during the first year</p>	<p>37% (48) of all Steppingstone 2013 high school graduates completed the Freshman check-in</p> <p>67% (44) of Steppingstone 2013 BPS graduates had full-time credit accumulation by the end of the first year<sup>2</sup></p> <p>71% (95) of all 2013 Steppingstone high school graduates contacted by a college services</p>	<p>100% (80 estimated) of 2015 cohort to complete the Freshman Check-In</p> <p>70% (56) of 2015 cohort to have full-time credit accumulation by the end of the first year</p> <p>100% (80) of 2015 cohort contacted in the first year of college</p>	

				advisor intern during the first year		
			Number of contacts per student per semester	<sup>3</sup> See note below	100% of 2015 cohort will receive a minimum of 4 contacts each semester during the first year of a post-secondary program	
	3. Steppingstone college coach will connect Steppingstone's 2015 BosC4C cohort to appropriate campus resources for academic, financial, and social/emotional support and to facilitate college/campus engagement.	% of 2015 cohort connected by Steppingstone's college coach to campus resources for academic, financial, and social/emotional support, and to facilitate college/campus engagement		<sup>4</sup> See note below	90% of 2015 cohort connected to campus resources in the first year by Steppingstone's college coach	
	4. Steppingstone's college coach will provide opportunities for Steppingstone's 2015 BosC4C cohort to stay in touch as a peer support group	# of peer group opportunities offered to 2015 cohort in the first year of (and during transition to) post-		2 peer group social activities of activities offered to 2013 BPS graduates in the first year	2 full Steppingstone class and 2 campus-based (where students may be clustered) peer	

			secondary programs	of college	group social activities offered to 2015 cohort in the first year	
			% of 2015 cohort that participate in at least one peer group activity	47% of Steppingstone 2013 BPS graduates participated in at least one peer group social activity	50% of 2015 cohort to participate in a peer group social activity	
3	<b>Persistence Goal:</b> Steppingstone's 2015 BosC4C cohort will remained enrolled for a second year of college (or other post-secondary education) and grow their awareness of the relationship between college and career	1. Steppingstone's college coach will monitor: GPA, credit accumulation and the completion of registration for second year courses. The coach will also help students in the 2015 cohort review financial sustainability.  2. Steppingstone will offer career seminar opportunities and will keep students apprised of summer internship opportunities	% of students persisting for a second year          % and # of 2015 cohort completing FAFSA updates          # of career seminars offered during the grant period	91% of Steppingstone 2013 BPS graduates persisted in a post-secondary program for a second year.          91% (60) estimated 2013 BPS graduates completing FAFSA updates          4 of career seminars will be offered to 2014 BPS graduates	95% of 2015 cohort to persist in a post-secondary program for a second year          100% (80) of 2015 cohort complete FAFSA updates          4 to 6 career seminars will be offered to the 2015 cohort	

4						
5						

**NOTES:**

<sup>1</sup> Steppingstones' baseline groups are either 2013 or 2014 high school graduates who completed The Steppingstone Academy's academic preparation program. In some cases, baselines include only those graduating from a Boston Public School, and in other cases, baselines include those graduating from a Boston Public School (BPS) or an independent school. Under the grant initiative, the Steppingstone Foundation's data will be segmented to track college coaching services and benchmarks for graduates of Boston public high schools only.

<sup>2</sup> Based on information from the National Student Clearinghouse.

<sup>3</sup> Steppingstone's current college services program has not had the capacity to ensure a minimum number of contacts per semester for each student served. Expansion of Steppingstone's college coaching services under this grant programs will enable Steppingstone to set and reach greater benchmarks going forward.

<sup>4</sup> Steppingstone's current college services program has not tracked referrals of Scholars to campus resources consistently. Expansion of Steppingstone's college coaching services under this grant program will enable Steppingstone to track desired outcomes more consistently.





November 21, 2014

The Boston Foundation  
75 Arlington Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

To the Boston Foundation:

The Steppingstone Foundation has contacted Boston University about Steppingstone's intention to apply for a grant under the Boston Foundation's Boston Coaching for Completion program, which is a Social Innovation Fund Initiative. Boston University would be pleased to collaborate with The Steppingstone Foundation and approves of Steppingstone's proposal to provide college coaching services to Boston Public School graduates at Boston University to help improve college persistence and graduation rates for Boston students. We understand that The Steppingstone Foundation's college coaching program will advise students in both one-on-one and group coaching sessions to build on and expand Success Boston's efforts to raise post-secondary completion rates for Boston students. We also understand that students served by The Steppingstone Foundation (as a subgrantee under the grant program) will be those who have completed Steppingstone's academic preparation program and have enrolled at Boston University for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Boston University looks forward to coordinating and collaborating with The Steppingstone Foundation's college coaching program with respect to students' needs and support services. We understand that the Boston Foundation's grant guidelines require that Boston University and The Steppingstone Foundation negotiate a more formal partnership agreement—which may include data sharing and coordination commitments—if Steppingstone is selected to receive funding as a subgrantee under the Boston Coaching for Completion initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denise C. Mooney".

Denise C. Mooney  
Associate Vice President



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

November 21, 2014

Paul S. Grogan  
President  
The Boston Foundation  
75 Arlington Street, 10<sup>th</sup> floor  
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Mr. Grogan:

The Steppingstone Foundation has contacted Bunker Hill Community College about Steppingstone's intention to apply for a grant under the Boston Foundation's Boston Coaching for Completion program, which is a Social Innovation Fund Initiative. Bunker Hill Community College is willing to collaborate with The Steppingstone Foundation and approves of Steppingstone's proposal to provide college coaching services to Boston Public School graduates at Bunker Hill Community College to help improve college persistence and graduation rates for Boston students. We understand that The Steppingstone Foundation's college coaching program will advise students in both one-on-one and group coaching sessions to build on and expand Success Boston's efforts to raise post-secondary completion rates for Boston students. We also understand that students served by The Steppingstone Foundation (as a subgrantee under the grant program) will be those who have completed Steppingstone's academic preparation program and have enrolled at Bunker Hill Community College for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Bunker Hill Community College is willing to coordinate and collaborate with The Steppingstone Foundation's college coaching program around students' needs and support services. We understand that the Boston Foundation's grant guidelines require that Bunker Hill Community College and The Steppingstone Foundation negotiate a more formal partnership agreement -- which may include data sharing and coordination commitments -- if Steppingstone is selected to receive funding as a subgrantee under the Boston Coaching for Completion initiative.

We stand ready to support The Steppingstone Foundation in carrying out a successful project. Please contact me or Sally Buckley, Dean of Enrollment Services and LifeMap (617-936-1920 / [sabuckle@bhcc.mass.edu](mailto:sabuckle@bhcc.mass.edu)), if further information is needed.

Sincerely,

Pam Y. Eddinger, Ph.D.  
President

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**CHARLESTOWN CAMPUS**

250 New Rutherford Avenue • Boston, Massachusetts 02129-2925  
Telephone: 617-228-2000 TTY: 617-228-2051

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[www.bhcc.mass.edu](http://www.bhcc.mass.edu)

November 20, 2014

To the Boston Foundation:

The Steppingstone Foundation has contacted the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth about Steppingstone's intention to apply for a grant under the Boston Foundation's Boston Coaching for Completion program, which is a Social Innovation Fund Initiative. The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth is willing to collaborate with The Steppingstone Foundation and approves of Steppingstone's proposal to provide college coaching services to Boston Public School graduates at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth to help improve college persistence and graduation rates for Boston students.

We understand that The Steppingstone Foundation's college coaching program will advise students in both one-on-one and group coaching sessions to build on and expand Success Boston's efforts to raise post-secondary completion rates for Boston students. We also understand that students served by The Steppingstone Foundation (as a sub grantee under the grant program) will be those who have completed Steppingstone's academic preparation program and have enrolled at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth for the 2015-2016 academic year.

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth is willing to coordinate and collaborate with The Steppingstone Foundation's college coaching program around students' needs and support services. We understand that the Boston Foundation's grant guidelines require that the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and The Steppingstone Foundation negotiate a more formal partnership agreement -- which may include data sharing (under FERPA guidelines) and coordination commitments -- if Steppingstone is selected to receive funding as a sub grantee under the Boston Coaching for Completion initiative.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like further information about this partnership. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Carol Spencer  
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Success

One University Avenue  
Lowell, Massachusetts 01854  
tel. 978.934.2936  
fax: 978.934.3088



University of  
Massachusetts  
Lowell

### Intention to Partner - Sample Letter

#### CENTERS FOR LEARNING AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

*Learning with Purpose*  
To the Boston Foundation:

The Steppingstone Foundation has contacted the University of Massachusetts Lowell about Steppingstone's intention to apply for a grant under the Boston Foundation's Boston Coaching for Completion program, which is a Social Innovation Fund Initiative. The University of Massachusetts Lowell is willing to collaborate with The Steppingstone Foundation and approves of Steppingstone's proposal to provide college coaching services to Boston Public School graduates at the University of Massachusetts Lowell to help improve college persistence and graduation rates for Boston students. We understand that The Steppingstone Foundation's college coaching program will advise students in both one-on-one and group coaching sessions to build on and expand Success Boston's efforts to raise post-secondary completion rates for Boston students. We also understand that students served by The Steppingstone Foundation (as a subgrantee under the grant program) will be those who have completed Steppingstone's academic preparation program and have enrolled at the University of Massachusetts Lowell for the 2015-2016 academic year.

The University of Massachusetts Lowell is willing to coordinate and collaborate with The Steppingstone Foundation's college coaching program around students' needs and support services. We understand that the Boston Foundation's grant guidelines require that the University of Massachusetts Lowell and The Steppingstone Foundation negotiate a more formal partnership agreement -- which may include data sharing and coordination commitments -- if Steppingstone is selected to receive funding as a subgrantee under the Boston Coaching for Completion initiative.

(Signature)

*Sheila Riley-Callahan*

(Printed Name)

*SHEILA RILEY-CALLAHAN*

(Title)

(Date)

*11/24/14*



**Boston Coaching for Completion  
Social Innovation Fund Transition Coaching Expansion**

**Narrative: Project Description  
Submitted by The Steppingstone Foundation**

**1. Describe your work in supporting low-income high school students and graduates in transitioning to and through post-secondary education, including a description of your theory of change and program model.**

Founded in 1990, The Steppingstone Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that develops and implements programs that prepare underserved students for educational opportunities that lead to college success. Each year, Steppingstone serves approximately 1,000 Boston schoolchildren in grades 5-12 and another 475 in college. Steppingstone's theory of change is to increase the rate of college graduation for economically disadvantaged Boston students by providing them with long-term preparation and support beginning in the middle grades and continuing through the achievement of a college degree. Steppingstone's theory is that students can be set on a successful pathway to college, as early as the middle grades, by providing intensive academic services afterschool and during the summer to prevent and remediate achievement gaps, offering social-emotional support and one-on-one advising, engaging students' families in the school and college application process, and delivering services to college-enrolled students to help them navigate the complete college experience. Under this theory of change, direct services to promote college access and success are supported by Steppingstone's creation of and participation in the National Partnership for Educational Access, which disseminates best practices for assisting underserved students and shares resources with college access programs around the nation.

Steppingstone Scholars who complete Steppingstone's rigorous academic preparation component are provided with support services throughout high school and college to ensure that they reach the academic and personal benchmarks associated with college admission and graduation. Steppingstone's college readiness services are managed by a team of Steppingstone support services advisors who provide Scholars with college tours, access to discounted SAT prep classes, and guidance on all aspects of the college and financial aid application process. Once admitted to college or another credit-earning post-secondary program, Steppingstone Scholars are assigned a college services advisor. Currently, Steppingstone's college services are administered by a full-time Director of College Services with the assistance of three part-time graduate student interns who serve as college services advisors. College services advisors initiate contact with Steppingstone high school graduates to build rapport and to help students plan for their matriculation to post-secondary programs. In addition, a Steppingstone Summer Bridge Program offers workshop opportunities to recent graduates on topics such as using campus resources, financial literacy, and networking with other college students. During the first year of college, Steppingstone's college services advisors offer students a Freshman Check-In, which is an opportunity for first-year students to assess their adjustments to college both academically and socially. College services advisors also request that first-year students complete a four-year academic plan to help guide their college course selections during the first year and in subsequent academic years. In 2014, Steppingstone initiated a career readiness program, which is creating seminars and affinity groups for Steppingstone Scholars who are in high school and college to help them make stronger connections between college coursework and future employment options.

While Steppingstone currently focuses more intensive college services on Scholars more recently enrolled in post-secondary programs, as well as those at less competitive schools, which studies suggest may have lower graduation rates, college services advisors will offer support and guidance to all college-enrolled Steppingstone Scholars until they achieve a credential (or choose to leave the program). Steppingstone would like to expand its services to offer more college coaching opportunities and to foster regular interactions with all college students with the goal of facilitating and maintaining high rates of college completion among Boston high school graduates who have been Steppingstone Scholars. Steppingstone's current college services staffing model (college advisor interns are part-time and there is only one additional full-time position that has both

supervisory and advising responsibilities) places limits on individual contacts with college students, often requiring Steppingstone to prioritize its efforts toward student-initiated requests for help or guidance. Although Steppingstone has been working to strengthen its college coaching model over the last three years, currently there is not enough capacity to reach out regularly to all college-enrolled Scholars. With a greater ability to stay in regular contact with Scholars transitioning from high school to their first two years of college, Steppingstone would be able to act more quickly to assist those students who may be facing college adjustment and performance challenges quietly or under the radar of their college's support systems. Steppingstone has a long history with each of its Scholars because Steppingstone programs begin preparing Boston schoolchildren for college enrollment and completion in fifth or sixth grade. Steppingstone's long-term relationships with Scholars position the organization to promptly assess and address their needs to ensure students progress and succeed in achieving a post-secondary credential.

## **2. What experience does your organization have in serving Boston students and graduates, or similar populations, especially BosC4C's priority population.**

For nearly twenty-five years, The Steppingstone Foundation has provided academic preparation and support services to Boston schoolchildren who aspire to a college education. Students served by Steppingstone's flagship program—The Steppingstone Academy—are ethnically diverse (45% African-American, 25% Hispanic, 17% Asian, 6% White, 7% Multi-Racial) and economically disadvantaged (overall, Scholars' average family income falls below \$40,000 per year). Students whose families can afford academic preparation and tutoring without a tuition-free program are not admitted to Steppingstone's programs.

Steppingstone has many years of experience working with Boston students who attend and graduate from Boston's public exam, charter, and district schools, and meet the criteria of the Boston Foundation's priority populations under the Boston Coaching for Completion initiative. Although The Steppingstone Academy prepares Boston schoolchildren for admission to both public exam and independent schools as a pathway to college, 62% of Academy Scholars currently in grades 6-12 have been placed in one of Boston's public exam schools. The small percentage of those not placed is likely to continue to attend a Boston Public School. Steppingstone Academy Scholars currently in fifth grade through college are approximately 42% male and 58% female. Steppingstone has served hundreds of young men of color with its academic and support services, and students who will be first generation college students have always been a target population for Steppingstone's programs. In addition, Steppingstone has a relationship with the law firm Ropes & Gray whose attorneys provide *pro bono* advice to Steppingstone Scholars and their families on issues related to immigration. Steppingstone's goal is to prepare Boston schoolchildren for entrance to and completion of four-year undergraduate programs; however, each year some Steppingstone Scholars choose to attend two-year colleges or other credit-earning post-secondary programs after high school graduation to achieve credentials or as a first step to obtaining a four-year college degree.

Steppingstone has carefully charted the educational achievements of its Scholars by collecting extensive data to track students' progress through Steppingstone's academic program, high school graduation, and college enrollment and completion. Steppingstone has information for about 93% of Scholars who complete The Steppingstone Academy's academic component and are old enough to have graduated from high school. Of this group of Scholars, 99% have graduated from high school and 92% of these graduates have enrolled at a four-year college (another 5% enroll at two-year colleges). While these statistics include Boston students who have attended both public exam schools and independent schools through Steppingstone's placement program, it is clear that hundreds of Steppingstone Scholars who attend Boston's public schools are transitioning to post-secondary programs after high school graduation. Overall, more than 80% of Steppingstone Scholars who enroll in a four-year college complete their degrees within six years. Since Steppingstone's inception, 461 Scholars have earned a four-year college degree.

**3. What will happen in the next year? During the multi-year grant period? Be sure to demonstrate how you will maintain or grow the number of student/coach matches during the BosC4C engagement, and preliminary plans for sustaining coaching activity beyond the BOSC4C funding period.**

A closer look at Steppingstone's college completion rates suggests that important increases in graduation rates for Steppingstone Scholars could be made with support from the Boston Coaching for Completion initiative. When Steppingstone's overall college graduation rate is segmented by type of college—public v. private—Scholar graduation rates at public institutions fall below Steppingstone's overall 80% six-year college completion rate. Just 65% of all Steppingstone Scholars (which include public exam and independent school graduates) who entered a Massachusetts public college at least six years ago graduated from a public college or any college (if transferred) within six years. The six-year graduation rate for Steppingstone Scholars falls to 58%, however, for those who enrolled in and graduated only from a public institution. Steppingstone Scholars who have attended community colleges have even lower rates of completion. Of the 46 Steppingstone Scholars who have attended a community college, 9% completed an associate degree, 22% are still attending, and 35% did not complete the community college program (another 28% transferred to a 4-year college). These lower graduation rates are concerning because approximately 40% of Steppingstone Scholars who were 2014 graduates of a Boston Public School chose to enroll in a public 4-year or community college, and 28% of Steppingstone Scholars who were 2013 public school graduates also enrolled a public 4-year or community college. Steppingstone has also determined while 91% of its 2013 Boston public school graduates persisted for a second year of college, just 67% of them achieved full-time credit accumulation by the end of their first year, according to National Student Clearinghouse data. Steppingstone believes that expanding college coaching services for Steppingstone Scholars over the grant period will improve overall rates of college graduation for Boston public high school students, especially those at public institutions of higher education who may be at greater risk of not completing a credential. Increasing the availability of a college coach would also help support students' efforts to accumulate the credits they need to make ongoing progress towards degree completion within six years.

During the multi-year Boston Coaching for Completion grant period, Steppingstone proposes to hire a full-time college coach in the first year to provide college coaching services to an estimated caseload of 80 Steppingstone Scholars who are expected to graduate from a Boston public high school in 2015, begin the transition to a post-secondary program, and complete a first year of post-secondary education in the 2015-2016 academic year. In the second year of the grant period, Steppingstone proposes to add an additional full-time coach to its college services program to provide and manage college coaching services for a second cohort of Steppingstone Scholars who are expected to graduate from a Boston public high school in 2016. In addition to hiring full-time coaching staff to work with Steppingstone's Boston Public School graduates during the grant period, Steppingstone will expand the Director of College Services' activities to cover the orientation and supervisory responsibilities required by the new coaching positions and to develop the partnership agreements and referral networks with colleges at which Steppingstone's 2015 and 2016 Boston Public School graduates will enroll. The grant will also fund the work of a support services associate (and advising services such as workshops and college tours), who is a key provider of college readiness services to high school seniors and who will transition them to Steppingstone's expanded college services model (obtaining necessary permissions to access data from Scholar's post-secondary programs); and it will support the time of a Steppingstone evaluator who will assist with the grant program's evaluation requirements.

Steppingstone's expanded college coaching model under the grant period will include existing Steppingstone offerings, such as one-on-one advising, transition workshops, financial meetings with families and assistance with FAFSA completion, the Freshman Check-In, and related academic planning. In addition, Steppingstone's expanded model will increase contacts with Scholars at their various colleges (including campus visits) to make sure Scholars receive regular check-ins (in addition to the Freshman Check-In), take advantage of seminars and group coaching opportunities, participate in peer group activities, and receive referrals to campus services, as needed, to ensure academic progress, engagement in college life, and the appropriate management of financial commitments required by post-secondary programs.

**4. What additional resources do you need?**

In addition to staffing resources, Steppingstone will request support for other direct costs associated with the expansion of its college coaching services. These items are detailed on the project budget accompanying this proposal. Steppingstone will also look forward to working and consulting with the cohort of college coaches funded by the Boston Coaching for Completion Initiative to learn more about college coaching techniques developed through the Success Boston model and to share Steppingstone's unique perspective on long-term advising relationships with Boston schoolchildren as they prepare for and enter post-secondary programs.

**5. What do you want to achieve and how will you contribute to advancing BosC4C goals and objectives?**

The Steppingstone Foundation is applying for grant consideration with many years of experience in helping Boston schoolchildren navigate a successful pathway to college and achieve a college degree. Steppingstone will advance the goals of the Boston Coaching for Completion Initiative, by improving Boston Public School graduates' rates of college persistence and credit accumulation as they work towards the completion of a post-secondary credential. Steppingstone's theory of change and programmatic model has already enabled Boston students to achieve high rates of college completion; however, an analysis of Steppingstone data indicates that Steppingstone Scholars could achieve even higher rates of graduation, especially those Scholars who begin their post-secondary enrollments at public universities and community colleges. The ability to reach out to more Scholars on a more regular basis and to provide additional informational and group coaching opportunities to reach goals and objectives under this initiative will require manpower in the form of full-time college coaching staff at The Steppingstone Foundation.

**6. With whom do you work? Please include a description of your partner institution(s) of higher education and a brief overview of the proposed partnership.**

Steppingstone Scholars are encouraged to consider a wide range of college options as they prepare for admission to post-secondary programs. Steppingstone can anticipate where students in any graduating class may cluster as they enter college, but information on where they matriculate is identified in the late spring and verified in the fall. An analysis of Steppingstone's data on Scholars graduating from a Boston public high school shows that Scholars graduating in 2014 (and in 2013) enrolled in nearly 40 different colleges. There were clusters of students matriculating at University of Massachusetts campuses, and other Boston-area institutions such as Boston University, Suffolk University, and Bunker Hill Community College. Steppingstone has approached schools at which clusters of enrolled Scholars might be found in 2015 to request a partnership letter. To date, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, the University of Massachusetts Lowell, Boston University and Bunker Hill Community College have all provided letters stating a willingness to partner with Steppingstone's college coaching program. Steppingstone expects to continue its long-term advising relationships with Scholars who graduate from Boston public schools and matriculate at colleges through its college coaching model. Steppingstone anticipates that a more formal partnership with colleges will result in greater access to Scholar information (with Scholar permission), and greater knowledge of campus resources which will increase Steppingstone's ability to advise students and link them with appropriate campus-based resources to ensure a successful adjustment to college and ongoing academic progress. When the college enrollment decisions of Steppingstone's 2015 public school graduates are confirmed, Steppingstone will reach out to those institutions to request partner relationships.

**7. Please describe your understanding of the institution(s) of higher education's environment and existing supports, and the potential for improving students' success rates through transition coaching.**

Steppingstone has been supporting Scholars with the school and college admissions processes, and advising them as they transition to new learning environments, for many years. Steppingstone's college readiness services, provided to all Steppingstone Scholars, also demonstrate Steppingstone's understanding of the role of higher education and the opportunities to be found in this environment. Steppingstone's existing college



services team has a solid background in the kinds of offerings that college and campus communities provide. The expansion of Steppingstone's college services with the addition of full-time college coaches would enable Steppingstone to grow its knowledge of the many colleges to which Steppingstone Scholars enroll and develop strong referral relationships with these academic communities. Transition coaching aided by regular student contacts, collection of data concerning student academic performance, and assessments of student adjustment will enable Steppingstone to better guide students as they plan for the completion of the college requirements and develop the personal skills to make the most of their college experience.

**8. How will your organization measure and learn from this work? Be sure to include a description of your data collection/management systems and identify how you will ensure compliance with all BosC4C and SIF reporting and evaluations requirements.**

The Steppingstone Foundation is a data-driven organization that has kept detailed records of Steppingstone Scholars' academic progress from the middle grades through college graduation. In a 2013 evaluation of Steppingstone as a college access program, Root Cause specifically recognized Steppingstone's strong performance measurement systems and culture. Steppingstone maintains a database of Scholar participants and supports an extensive set of files that track Scholar's school and college placements as well as graduation statistics. Steppingstone is well prepared to participate in an evaluation effort structured around the college coaching funding opportunity.

Steppingstone is also eager to learn from the expansion of college coaching services. In 2011, Steppingstone started a new academic program called the College Success Academy. Based on The Steppingstone Academy's effective model of academic preparation, the College Success Academy is working with middle-grade students to prepare them for college preparatory curricula in what is expected to be a Boston public high school. This program is meant to serve many of the students who are turned away from The Steppingstone Academy due to the limitations in space or financial aid opportunities at public exam or independent schools. The oldest College Success Academy Scholars are now in eighth grade, but in a few years will be graduating from a Boston public high school. Steppingstone hopes to learn more about college coaching and establish a model that will accommodate the needs of these Scholars as they become eligible for college services in the next five years.

**9. Impact Stories**

Steppingstone assisted a male African-American Scholar, who felt very challenged by the college application process, in making a successful transition to a post-secondary program. As a first-generation college aspirant, and with a history of some academic struggles at his high school, Tom (not his real name) was uncertain college was for him and felt lost in the application process. Tom decided to apply to a two-year college, but although he had completed a FAFSA application, he did not get it to the school on time. Steppingstone's Director of College Services worked with Tom to identify financial aid resources and helped Tom to reflect on his interests and align them with the opportunities the school could offer. From advising sessions, to standing in line at the financial aid office, to shepherding Tom to academic advising appointments, Steppingstone's Director of College Services facilitated Tom's successful transition to college. Tom thrived at his new school, performed well academically, and completed the necessary steps to ensure his persistence, including a timely renewal of his FAFSA. He will graduate with a degree at the end of 2014.

A second Steppingstone Scholar was assisted by Steppingstone's college services in finding the best campus fit to maintain his persistence in college. Rick (not his real name), a young man of Asian descent, had begun his freshman year at a public institution, quite a distance from his home in Boston. When Rick realized that he was not happy or engaged at this school, he turned to Steppingstone for guidance. Steppingstone's college services advisor helped Rick to explore whether this environment could work for him; and when it was decided that it would not work and that he wanted to be closer to family, Steppingstone's advisor coached him through the college transfer process. Rick is now settled at a private university that allows him to stay in touch with his family and enjoy their support as he continues to work towards a college degree.

## **The Steppingstone Foundation: Boston Coaching for Completion Proposal Clarification about Proposed Cohorts – December 17, 2014**

*Clarification about proposed cohorts: please provide a breakdown of the numbers of students in each of the three proposed cohorts (cohort 3 in particular is not clear). Please also clarify the origin of cohorts – are all students in each of the proposed cohorts BPS graduates from the Steppingstone pipeline (Steppingstone Academy)? Must all students in the cohort have preexisting relationships with Steppingstone?*

The Steppingstone Foundation tracks the academic progress and school placements of its Scholars throughout their participation in Steppingstone programs, which begin in the middle grades and continue through college. Therefore, Steppingstone is able to estimate the number of Scholars who are anticipated to graduate from high school each year, or who are likely to remain on a path to graduation at a particular public or independent secondary school. It is important to note that these estimates are subject to small fluctuations due to the effects of periodic program attrition (which can vary from year to year) or student transfers during the high school years.

Steppingstone's projections for the first two cohorts of the Boston Coaching for Completion program were based upon recent graduation data, as well as, graduation projections for current Scholars in The Steppingstone Academy who are attending Boston Public Schools. Currently, 83 Steppingstone Academy Scholars are on the path to graduate from a Boston public high school in 2015 and another 80 Scholars are anticipated to graduate from a Boston public high school in 2016. In 2017 -- corresponding to a third cohort of students to be served by the Boston Coaching for Completion initiative -- an estimated 72 Steppingstone Scholars are anticipated to graduate from a Boston public high school.

The cohorts to be served by The Steppingstone Foundation under the Boston Coaching for Completion initiative will be comprised of Steppingstone Academy Scholars who have completed Steppingstone's academic component and will graduate from a Boston public high school. Going forward, however, Steppingstone also plans to offer college services to Boston students who are enrolled in its newest initiative, the College Success Academy. Due to the limitations of space at public exam schools and financial aid opportunities at independent schools, Steppingstone created the College Success Academy in 2011 to bring its effective academic preparation and support services programs to a greater number of Boston schoolchildren who are motivated to work hard in school to ultimately enroll in college and achieve a four-year college degree. Currently, the College Success Academy is serving students in three Allston-Brighton K-8 public schools, but will be expanded to an East Boston neighbor K-8 school in 2015. The oldest College Success Academy Scholars are now in the eighth grade and will be entering high school in the 2015-2016 academic year. The College Success Academy's academic preparation and support services program is based on the model of The Steppingstone Academy, but the focus of the College Success Academy is on schoolchildren who are likely to enter a Boston public high school on their pathways to college. Given the successful launch of the College Success Academy and plans to expand it for eventual citywide access, Steppingstone anticipates serving a significantly greater number of Boston public school graduates with college coaching services in the next five to ten years.