



## Letter of Inquiry

### Organization Information

**Grant ID:** I2015-0296

**Legal Name of Organization:** Match Education

**Grant Type:** Project Support

**EIN Number:** 04-3476160

**NTEE Code:** Education

**Amount Requested from the Boston Foundation:** \$600,000.00

**Project Budget:** \$1,200,000.00

**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)	9560421.00	5539479.00
Current Fiscal Year (budget)	6288430.00	6340495.00
Next Fiscal Year (projected)	6877686.00	5909499.00

### **Organization Address:**

215 Forest Hills Street  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

### **Organization Description:**

Match Education is an engine of discovery and applied innovation in education. We operate high-performing urban public charter schools and a unique graduate school of education that trains teachers for high-poverty schools. Out of this applied work, we refine, validate empirically, and eventually disseminate new ideas and practices on core questions in education reform.

- Match Public Charter School is a high-performing, innovative charter public school in Boston, widely recognized for its ability to prepare students for college success, serving students from PreK-12 on multiple campuses across the city.
- Charles Sposato Graduate School of Education grants Master's in Effective Teaching degrees through an unconventional approach to training teachers, with highly directed coaching from master educators and practice of teaching and classroom management techniques.



- Match Beyond: Match Beyond supports students on an accelerated pathway toward fully accredited Associate's and Bachelor's degrees, and will also place all students in jobs.

**Organization's Main Phone Number:**

**Organization's Main FAX Number:**

**Organization's Website:** [www.matcheducation.org](http://www.matcheducation.org)

**Year Founded:** 2000

**Total Number of Board Members:** 5

**Number of Full Time Equivalent Staff:** 47.00

**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:**

Mr. Stig Leschly, CEO  
[stig.leschly@matcheducation.org](mailto:stig.leschly@matcheducation.org)

**Contact Person:**

Mr. Timothy Regele, Development Director  
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## 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: **Match Education**  
 Program/Project Title: **Match Beyond**

Grant #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grant Period: Year 1  
 Report Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Long Term Goals</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Desired Results</b>	<b>Results as of Report Date</b>
	<i>What long term results do you want to achieve at the end of the grant period?</i>	<i>What are your plans or activities (program delivery and/or organizational capacity building) to achieve these goals?</i>	<i>What will you measure?</i>	<i>What is the current status of the activity?</i>	<i>What short term results do you want to see at the end of this grant year?</i>	<i>What results did you achieve this year?</i>
<b>1</b>	80% of Match Beyond students complete their targeted CFA-SNHU degree	Match Beyond will provide coaching for 300 students that enroll in CFA-SNHU during academic years 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 (100 students/yr), staying with them for at least two years of post-secondary	Student indicators such as: student profile and demographic data, enrollment, competencies completed, Pell eligibility	Match Beyond launched with first cohort of 25 students in July 2014, who are currently enrolled in CFA-SNHU and receiving coaching from Match	95% persistence (re-enrollment) rates from year one to two for Cohort 1	
<b>2</b>	Shortened time to degree completion (i.e. on average, 1.5 years for a CFA-SNHU Associate's degree and 3 years for a CFA-SNHU Bachelor's degree)		Service data such as: service type, duration, frequency, nature/content of interaction		Cohort 1 students enrolled in Associates degree program complete 67% of required competencies by end of first 12 months of study and Cohort 1 students enrolled in Bachelor's degree program complete 33% of required competencies by end of first 12 months of study	
<b>3</b>	75% placement rate of CFA-SNHU graduates into middle-class jobs, i.e. annualized salary of \$40,000 with benefits	Match Beyond career coaches will prepare students for high-quality employment at completion of SNHU-CFA degrees, for instance: encouraging and helping students to find resume-building internships, extra-curricular activities and jobs during their studies, and to network and prepare for interviews	Post-graduation activity  Wages for graduates placed into jobs	n/a	Match Beyond will form strong relationships with employers in the Boston area and develop deep knowledge about and pathways to employment opportunities for which students can qualify (especially for which there are labor/skills gaps)	

November 25, 2014

Elizabeth Pauley, Senior Director  
The Boston Foundation  
75 Arlington St, 10<sup>th</sup> floor  
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Ms. Pauley:

College for America, a nonprofit college at Southern New Hampshire University, is designed specifically to provide an online learning model that is uniquely affordable, flexibly scheduled to fit in busy lives, and built to develop competencies and promotable skills through project-based, real-world learning instead of traditional lectures and credit hours. Breaking through the barriers to a college degree – rising costs, family obligations and the demands of work and community – College for America aims to open access to opportunity, promotion and fulfillment for busy and working learners.

As such, we are pleased to partner with Match Education in order to help more low-income Boston students succeed. We are fully supportive of Match's proposal to provide coaching to students of College for America, and we look forward to continuing to coordinate and collaborate accordingly around student needs and support services.

Sincerely,



Kris Clerkin  
Executive Director  
College for America

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.*

Match Education is an engine of discovery and applied innovation in education. We operate high-performing urban public charter schools that span grades preK-12, and a unique graduate school of education that trains teachers and instructional leaders for high-poverty schools. Out of this applied work, we refine, validate empirically, and disseminate new ideas and practices on core questions in education reform.

To date, we have over a decade of experience in preparing and sending low-income students to college – and we have one of the highest college completion rates of any high-need school operator in the US. Still, we are driven to create better college outcomes and options for our alumni and for low-income high school graduates in Boston more broadly. Our newest innovation, Match Beyond, theorizes that by providing high quality personal coaching to low-income high school graduates in Boston who are enrolled in an online Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree program at College for America (CFA), an arm of Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU), we will produce unprecedented graduation rates and employment outcomes. With the supports they need and deserve – and a college format that is low-cost, competency-based and self-paced – our low-income students will successfully complete college, on a path to careers with family-sustaining wages. Key design features of Match Beyond are outlined below.

*Supporting College-Going Youth in Boston.* Match Beyond will provide personal coaching to low-income high school graduates and college non-completers in Boston who are enrolled in College for America-Southern New Hampshire University (CFA-SNHU). In addition to the Match High School alumni network, students served by Match Beyond will be introduced to us from community partners, currently including the alumni programs of several Boston schools (e.g. Codman Academy Charter School, Boston Preparatory Charter Public School, Excel Academy, Edward Brooke Charter School), College Bound Dorchester (a nonprofit that serves disconnected and underserved youth and families in Dorchester), More Than Words (a nonprofit social enterprise that empowers youth who are in the foster care system, court involved, homeless, or out of school), and InnerCity Weightlifting (a nonprofit that empowers former and active gang members, and young victims of domestic abuse). Over time, Match Beyond will work with dozens of additional Boston-based community organizations to support their students on a path to higher education and career success.

*Online Degrees from Southern New Hampshire University’s College for America.* Match Beyond students are enrolled in CFA-SNHU’s fully accredited online platform, and working towards an Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree from SNHU. Grounded in quality frameworks for higher education and resting on the building blocks of Lumina Foundation’s Degree Qualifications Profile and US Dept. of Labor competency models, CFA-SNHU’s rigorous online curriculum is self-paced and focused on job-relevant skills and knowledge (“competencies”). Numerous employers have already embraced CFA-SNHU, including ConAgra and Anthem BlueCross BlueShield.

*Personal Coaching and Problem Solving.* Match Beyond coaches will form authentic relationships with students and, in the context of those genuine relationships, motivate and problem solve with them in their transition to and persistence through at least two years of post-secondary education. Coaches will work with students one-on-one and in small groups, providing mentorship and assistance navigating college demands. Example coaching activities include: conducting regular check-ins with students; assisting students in learning time management skills to help balance school, work and life; monitoring students’ academic progress; providing students with personalized guidance and coaching on decisions that may prevent them from persisting; and helping students connect to advising, counseling, tutoring and other support services.

We will support Match Beyond students with the same “no excuses” attitude that governs our preK-12 schools, relentlessly addressing the sometimes mundane but decisive barriers that often undermine student progress (e.g. transportation to study sessions, home internet access, child-care at our locations around Boston). In running nationally recognized schools, we have over a decade of experience in supporting students to the finish line.

*Job Placement and Readiness Services.* In line with Success Boston’s emerging “Getting Connected” strategy, in everything Match Beyond undertakes, there is a sustained focus on helping young people connect to the workforce. In addition to coaching students as they enroll in and navigate through post-secondary education, Match Beyond career coaches help students prepare for high-quality employment at the completion of their SNHU degrees. For instance, during their online studies, we will encourage and help students to find resume-building internships, extra-curricular activities and “earn while you learn” jobs, and to network and prepare for interviews. Match Beyond also develops strong relationships with Boston-area employers and knowledge of the labor market, providing students with the added benefit of connections to employment opportunities for which they qualify and for which there is demand (i.e. labor/skills gaps).

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

Match Education has over a decade of experience in serving Boston students through our innovative, high-performing public schools, and we are widely recognized for our achievement in preparing diverse and low-income Boston students for success in college and careers. We firmly believe that academic readiness – measured importantly on AP exams and the SAT – matters to college success, but like Success Boston, non-academic and non-cognitive factors have a key place in our long-term outcome model for students. As such, in addition to our top-notch classroom instruction, we have incessantly refined and perfected one-on-one and small group tutoring and coaching to provide the individual supports students need and deserve.

Match Charter Public School, which currently includes four campuses spanning grades preK-12 and will ultimately enroll 1,250 students (up from the current 900 students), provides students with high quality tutoring in higher doses than any public school across the nation. Harvard economist Roland Fryer has found impressive gains, noting that such simple gestures of social and emotional support offered through our tutoring could be as important as the academic training; and, a randomized trial led by Jens Ludwig of the University of Chicago Urban Education Lab found that students at a Chicago high school who participated in an intense tutoring program based on Match’s model learned in an eight-month period the equivalent of what the average American high school student learns in math over three years of school (as measured by standardized test scores) over and above what a similar group of students who did not receive the tutoring or counseling did. In addition to Chicago, schools in Houston, New Orleans, New York, Newark, NJ and Lawrence, MA have adopted forms of Match’s tutoring model.

Much of Match’s experience and success, briefly outlined below, not only aligns with Success Boston and BosC4C goals and objectives – it has been with students that significantly reflect BosC4C priority populations. In fact, Match student demographics mirror those of conventional district schools within Boston Public Schools (BPS). Our student body is 96% non-white, predominantly Black (46%) and Hispanic (46%). 78% of our students are low-income, 16% have special needs, and 35% are English Language Learners. At our elementary campus, 82% of students are English Language Learners.

*Getting Ready:* We have been steadfastly focused on increasing the curricular rigor of high school and enhancing students’ “college readiness” – and our efforts are paying off. Each Match High School student is expected to pass at least three advanced placement (AP) courses over the course of their junior and senior years, and senior students must take and pass two courses at nearby Boston University. As a result, Match students are far more likely to take AP courses than their peers at other schools both locally and nationally, and they are more than three times more likely to achieve a passing score as compared to peers at other non-selective Boston public schools. Results have steadily improved and skyrocketed in 2013-14: 72% of juniors and seniors participated in at least one AP class, and 51% of AP exams administered resulted in a passing grade. In Calculus, the results were especially powerful: 40% of our seniors took our AB Calculus course and the related AP exam, with 95% receiving a passing score and 30% receiving the highest possible score. Match High School had more African-American students pass AP Calculus than any other high school in Massachusetts.

*Getting In:* Our dramatic success in developing students’ “college readiness” through rigorous curriculum and unwaveringly high expectations greatly increases our students’ prospects for successful enrollment in higher education – but we also have specific experience in helping students apply to, select, enroll in, and transition to institutions of higher education. Every Match student takes the SAT, and all Match students receive college application and alumni support. Our SAT results have been improving steadily for the past few years, and our students outperformed the national average last year. Our efforts have led to significant achievements: for the last decade, Match Education has sent more than 80% of our high school graduates to four-year colleges. Most recently, 85% of graduates from Match High School enter four-year colleges, and with one or two exceptions each year, the remaining 15% enter two-year colleges.

*Getting Through:* We have much experience in providing student supports to increase perseverance, including through tracking student persistence, progress and performance. With our aforementioned tutoring and coaching model, we have continuously improved our students’ persistence: in 2013-14, attrition across our schools was 8% from September to September. Our elementary grades had 4% attrition, middle school grades had 13% attrition, and high school grades had 8% attrition. While we are proud of the low attrition rates across our schools, which compare favorably to most public schools in Boston, exemplary college graduation rates from four-year colleges are the gold standard by which we measure our success.

With a decade of experience, we now have firm college completion data on our first five cohorts of high school graduates: 56% of graduates from these early cohorts have finished a four-year college. This early data point is far ahead of the norm for low-income high school graduates.

While our track record is strong, we remain unsatisfied – too many of our well-prepared students still are not persisting, often for non-academic reasons. Through our experiences and successes, we have developed deep understanding and expertise in helping students to address non-academic barriers and to build necessary non-cognitive skills. With our unique knowledge and ability to manage innovation – as well as additional resources and targeted coaching through Match Beyond – we know we can drastically improve college completion rates for our students, and, importantly, for low-income high school graduates in Boston more broadly.

	% of HS Graduates who <b>Enroll</b> in a 4-year College	% of HS Graduates who <b>Complete</b> a 4-year College
All U.S. Public High School Graduates	74%	36%
U.S. Public High School Graduates: Top Income Quartile	90%	88%
U.S. Public High School Graduates: Bottom Income Quartile	59%	12%
<b>Match High School Graduates</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>54%</b>

**3. What will happen in the next year? During the multi-year grant period?**

In July 2014, we launched our first cohort of 25 Match Beyond students, who are currently enrolled in online degree programs through CFA-SNHU and benefiting from our robust coaching services. From this start, we plan to grow over the next five years to a steady state of 550 students annually and a permanent staff of 17 employees, mainly coaches. With SIF funds from the Boston Foundation and our matching dollars, we will coach 300 low-income Boston students who enroll in CFA-SNHU, staying with them through at least two years of post-secondary education. One hundred students will begin CFA-SNHU within each of the next three academic years, 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18). In addition to graduates from each year’s high school class, Match Beyond will coach students who finished high school a year or more prior.

SIF funding would significantly help us to demonstrate the effectiveness of Match Beyond – and to build towards an operational model that can sustain itself after year 5 without philanthropy. Subject to a pending services agreement, CFA-SNHU will contract with Match Beyond, paying a modest fee for the coaching and job placement services. When combined with modest fees from employers who hire graduates, these fees will allow Match Beyond to break-even by year 5. Further, we expect that 80% of students served will be eligible for Pell Grants and, as a result, will incur no personal debt or expense for enrolling in CFA-SNHU and receiving support from Match Beyond.

*4. What additional resources do you need?*

SIF funds from the Boston Foundation would primarily be used to support direct coaching staff for a cohort of 300 BosC4C students. With a goal of reaching 550 students, Match will need to secure additional philanthropic capital to help the organization reach sustainability. As previously stated, Match Beyond has the potential to become self-sustaining at 550 students enrolled, receiving revenue from both the Pell grant and employer placement fees. To reach sustainability, Match anticipates a total philanthropic investment of \$3.9m. To date, Match has raised \$1.1m toward that goal. To grow to 550 students Match will also need to increase the number of community partners, and sourcing the right students from the right organizations will be a critical component of success.

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

Over the past fourteen years, Match Education has established a track record of success in educating students to succeed in college and beyond. Approximately 56% of Match Charter Public School alumni from our first five cohorts have earned a four-year college degree, which is much stronger than the national average for low-income high school graduates. However, we are not satisfied with these results. As Success Boston is well aware, there is an urgent need for affordable and effective pathways for low-income students to earn post-secondary degrees. We have created Match Beyond to develop unique ways of solving the problem of low-income students who are transitioning to or re-starting college. Employing our expertise in coaching and building both academic and non-cognitive skills in students, Match Beyond supports low-income students to help them earn a degree and use that degree to obtain a sustainable job. Our key operating goals are highly aligned with BosC4C's goals and objectives:

- 80% graduation rate (i.e. 80% of Match Beyond students will complete their targeted CFA-SNHU degree);
- Shortened time to degree completion (i.e. on average, 1.5 years for a CFA-SNHU Associate's degree and 3 years for a CFA-SNHU Bachelor's degree); and
- 75% placement rate of CFA-SNHU graduates into middle-class jobs (i.e. annualized salary of \$40,000 with benefits).

Several Match Beyond supporting goals and objectives also align with and contribute to advancing BosC4C supporting goals and objectives, including: all students eligible to complete a FAFSA do so each year; all students connected to available student supports and programs, as needed; increased post-secondary re-enrollment rates in 2nd, 3rd, etc., year; lessons captured through evaluation; and decisions and refinements driven by data.

We are also excited at the potential to join the BosC4C learning community, and expect that we can contribute greatly to the initiatives' learning and systems change objectives. For example, our unique model and partnership with CFA-SNHU will not only graduate more students and provide insights into effective coaching practices and partnerships with higher education institutions; our work will also offer insights into how higher education institutions can address and remove barriers to completion by innovating and developing flexible pathways to degrees and jobs.

*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.*

Match Beyond has a partnership and pending services agreement with Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU)'s College for America, the first and only program of its kind to be approved by a regional accreditation agency and by the Department of Education for Title IV financial aid support. CFA-SNHU provides competency-based degree programs built on project-based learning that is uniquely applicable in the workplace, flexibly scheduled to fit in busy lives, and extraordinarily affordable. CFA-SNHU's rigorous and relevant online curriculum is self-paced, fully accredited, and focuses on job-relevant competencies. Both the Associate's and Bachelor's degrees focus on definable skills and measurable results.

Match Beyond has several partners in Boston that will refer students for participation in our coaching, currently including several Boston schools (e.g. Codman Academy Charter School, Boston Preparatory Charter Public



School, Excel Academy, Edward Brooke Charter School), College Bound Dorchester, More Than Words, and InnerCity Weightlifting. Over time, Match Beyond will work with dozens of Boston-based community organizations to support their students on a path to higher education and career success.

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

Match Education has been pleased to partner with College for America-Southern New Hampshire University as we successfully launched our first cohort of 25 Match Beyond students in July 2014. There is much synergy between our institutions' goals, and CFA-SNHU offers a uniquely flexible higher education environment that greatly supports Match Beyond students' ability to persist as they juggle the many competing priorities in their lives. For example, through project-based learning, instead of advancing based on time-logged in rigid courses, students are able to advance by demonstrating what they know. This allows them to spend less time demonstrating mastery of competencies they already have basic knowledge of, while taking extra time and seeking extra support building skills they haven't yet developed. Further, CFA-SNHU's model provides students with quick, rigorous feedback by professional educators on every project.

Additionally important, the competencies students master to earn a degree from CFA-SNHU are specifically designed to build job-relevant skills. From the outset, every CFA-SNHU – and thus Match Beyond – student develops skills like communication and critical thinking that increase their employability. In fact, given CFA-SNHU's mission of closing the skills gap that faces employers and employees alike, they have an in-house workforce strategies team that helps drive curriculum and connect workforce research, higher education, and labor market needs.

*8. How will your organization measure and learn from this work?*

Match Education is highly adept at collecting and using data for determining and improving program performance, and we are fully committed to ensuring full compliance with BosC4C and SIF reporting and evaluation requirements. We have more than a decade of experience in making decisions and allocating resources based on real-time data on student performance. With an adamant focus on evaluation and improvement, we constantly seek to improve our outcomes and hold ourselves to truly groundbreaking results. In order to ensure we're able to apply our learning – and to meet our diverse students where they are – we maintain a commitment to flexibility, both organizationally and on an individual level, which allows for necessary course corrections.

Specifically, Match Beyond will utilize a Salesforce database to collect and manage data on both coaching activity and student performance. All Match Beyond coaches will be skilled in using our system and committed to participating in all BosC4C and SIF reporting and evaluation activities. Match Education also employs an experienced Data Manager who will further ensure all measurement-related compliance requirements are met.

*9. Impact Story: Please share a brief story about the organization, its programs or clients that illustrates its impact.*

Lissandra graduated from Match High School in 2012. She moved to the United States when she was 12 and lived in the Archdale Housing Development in Roslindale upon her arrival. At the time of her graduation she was unable to attend college because she could not access financial aid. In the fall of 2013, she was able to access financial aid, but unable to enroll in traditional college because of responsibilities at home. So in the fall of 2013, she enrolled in Southern New Hampshire University's College for America. She began receiving regular coaching from Match Beyond coach Bob Hill in January 2014. This coaching included goal setting, almost daily communication, and support in problem solving. Lissandra took to the coaching and quickly began devoting more and more time to her studies. She worked with her coach 15 to 20 hours per week for months. In the end the hard work paid off. She received her Associate's Degree in November, only a year after enrolling in College for America. On December 1<sup>st</sup>, she will start her Bachelor's degree coursework at College for America, seeking a major in Communications with a focus in Business. She'll continue to receive coaching from Bob. She has also been hired by Match Beyond to coach other students currently enrolled in College for America.