



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

**BREAKTHROUGH CENTRAL TEXAS**

**NOVEMBER 19, 2018**

## 1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

Since our founding in Austin in 2001, Breakthrough Central Texas has innovated to increase postsecondary completion rates for low-income students in the Central Texas region. In the last 16 years, Breakthrough has undergone four expansions. Currently, the program is enrolling 280 new students annually and is on track to serve nearly 3,000 students in Central Texas by 2025. Breakthrough has produced more than 100 college graduates, and this number will triple in the next five years. Our program achieves results, with participants graduating from college at nearly seven times the rate of peers from low-income communities.

Breakthrough finds itself at an organizational inflection point. In 2018 the Board of Trustees substantiated a new Strategy Committee chaired by Trustee Kevin Ilcisin, VP of Strategy and Corporate Development at National Instruments. The committee has completed an initial body of work, identifying strategies to build out the organization's core, 12-year model in our partner school districts to bring the organization to a significantly larger scale, serving more than 3,000 students regionally. Now, the Strategy Committee and Board are committed to increasing our impact even further, setting a north-star target for the organization to double the number of first-generation college graduates in Central Texas each year. We have a call to action to innovate, to pivot from an organization focused solely on direct service to an organization that solves a fundamental and persistent community need by working strategically and collaboratively with networks within our region to build stronger systems of support for vulnerable students. Breakthrough Central Texas seeks a strategic planning consultant to support our efforts to create new organizational strategies to greatly increase our impact on the graduation rates of first-generation college aspirants from low-income communities in our region.

## 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Breakthrough will engage an external consultant with expertise in organizational design, research and analysis, and strategy planning to guide our Strategy Committee, Board, and staff in the work of strategy formation and execution.

**Timeline and deliverables.** The consultant will work closely with Breakthrough's board and staff from January to June 2019. By the end of this project, we expect to have a fully developed strategic business plan that provides a clear path for exploring alternative approaches to achieve significantly greater impact on the rate and number of first-generation college graduates in the Central Texas region. The plan could include, but is not limited to:

- Strategic goals with corresponding objectives, activities, and measures of success
- Complete business plan including the consideration of complementary models, the structure and resources necessary to carry them out and their potential for revenue generation
- Frameworks and tools for piloting alternative models and assessing future opportunities
- An operational plan to ensure quality execution of the strategic goals
- Research and analysis on critical questions, including but not limited to:
  - What are the underlying challenges to equitable attainment of college degrees for low-income and first-generation students? How are those challenges manifested in Central Texas?
  - What are the most viable solutions to addressing those challenges? Which of these solutions offer promising strategies for Breakthrough to consider in the coming years?
  - What opportunities exist for increased efficiency and effectiveness within Breakthrough's core, 12-year model? What organizational systems and structures need to be in place to ensure sustained excellence?
  - How have other successful organizations developed alternative models to increase their impact within a region? What strategic partnerships support our effort for greater scope and impact?

- What would a successful and sustainable revenue model look like in Breakthrough's future? What strategies would need to be in place to achieve that success?
- What structures will ensure equitable access to Breakthrough's services, enhance equity broadly, and be intentionally inclusive to the many stakeholders of the organization?

**Roles and responsibilities.** Breakthrough's Strategy Committee recently completed an initial phase of strategic work, including a market analysis and strategies to sustain the organization's current growth projections in the coming years. In addition to that foundational work, the organization would designate staff leads to assist in the research, analysis, and writing of the plan. As needed, the Strategy Committee or a similar body comprised of board, staff, and additional external and/or internal stakeholders, would be available to ensure the success of the project. We would expect the consultant to leverage those resources and provide significant, additional capacity to successfully develop a comprehensive strategic business plan as outlined in this request.

### 3. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL AND PROJECT TIMELINE

This Request for Proposal represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. Proposals will be accepted until 5pm CT on December 18, 2018. Evaluation of proposals will be conducted from December 19, 2018 to January 18, 2019. We will work toward selecting a contractor no later than January 18, 2019 so that work can begin such that this facilitated planning process will be completed no later than June 30, 2019. Proposals may be submitted to Michael Griffith, Executive Director, at [Michael@breakthroughctx.org](mailto:Michael@breakthroughctx.org).

Bidders should provide the following items as part of their proposal for consideration:

- Brief explanation of why this project is of interest and what qualifies the bidder to do the work
- Description of experience in constructing and delivering on strategic planning processes
- Examples of similar projects completed, testimonials from past clients, and references
- Proposed project plan, approach, timeline, and cost

### 4. BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS

Highly qualified bidders will possess proven expertise in leading planning processes for high-impact, scaling, and evolving organizations. Experience working with organizations that have built alternative models to achieve scale is desired, as is domain expertise in the education and college completion arena, as well as experience supporting organizations to engage in strategic partnerships. Additionally, preference will be given to consultants with experience helping organizations achieve outcomes that are equitable, inclusive, and diverse by design. Ability to move quickly, work collaboratively, listen carefully, maximize resources, surface and steward a variety of interests, and clarify a direction and plan for moving forward within a relatively short timeframe is critical.

### 5. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Breakthrough Central Texas will evaluate all proposals based on the following criteria.

- **Overall proposal suitability:** Proposed solution(s) must meet the scope and needs included herein and be presented in a clear and organized manner
- **Organizational experience:** Bidders will be evaluated on experience as it pertains to the scope of this project
- **Previous work:** Bidders will be evaluated on examples of their relevant work as well as client testimonials and references
- **Value and cost:** Bidders will be evaluated on the cost of their solution(s) based on the work to be performed in accordance with the scope of this project