



Pro Path Fund Support for Progressive Pathways to Post-Secondary Success Overview of Fund and 2016 Activity

Mission of the Fund

To promote the development of a Chicagoland education and workforce system with a seamless transition from secondary to post-secondary programs, by expanding the universe of transparent and accessible *Progressive Pathways to Post-Secondary Success*. Progressive Pathways allow individuals to alternate between and combine periods of education/training and employment, and thereby progressively build toward college and career success over an extended period of time.

Approach of the Fund

The approach of the Fund is to advance its mission through two means.

- 1) The creation of a shared learning community between workforce funders and education funders, whose focus will be on understanding Progressive Pathways, and the challenges individuals face following them.
- 2) The aggregation and strategic investment of flexible resources to improve Progressive Pathway success for young adults in the region. The kinds of strategies the Fund could pursue include:
 - a. Improvement of the content available for everyone to understand how Progressive Pathways work, and what resources (programs, models, funding) are available to support individuals who pursue them;
 - b. Improvement of the availability of career advising and planning tools which support individuals contemplating or pursuing progressive pathways, or which support those *assisting* such individuals (parents, teachers, counselors, case managers, etc.). "Tools" might include professional development curriculum, student curriculum, career planning tools, or cross-agency referral directories;
 - c. Improvement of K12 systems' ability to measure and count progressive pathway success as post-secondary success, and thus their ability to incentivize the promotion of progressive pathway options, and;
 - d. Improved training of those counseling young adults about post-secondary decisions, to help them understand, discuss and promote Progressive Pathway options.

Position of Pro Path Fund Within a Broader Frame

The Pro Path Fund seeks to change the "college for all" mindset, and replace it with the vision of a well-connected and transparent career pathway system with multiple entry points and multiple exit points for all, as described by the [Alliance for Quality Career Pathways](#). The Fund will also seek to both learn from and share lessons with similar efforts focused on adults, fully recognizing that both young adults and adults need a career pathway system that works for all.



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2016 Members of the Pro Path Fund			
Funder	Affiliation	Funder	Affiliation
Boeing	workforce	Kaplan Family Foundation	education
Brinson Foundation	education	Fry Foundation	both
Chicago Community Trust	both	MB Financial	education
Circle of Service Foundation	both	McCormick Foundation	workforce
Cleveland Ave Foundation	education	Michael Reese Health Trust	workforce
CME Group Foundation	education	Osa Foundation	education
Finnegan Family Foundation	education	Polk Bros Foundation	both
Grand Victoria Foundation	workforce	Siragusa Foundation	education
Joyce Foundation	both	United Way of Metro Chicago	workforce
JP Morgan Chase	workforce	Woods Fund of Chicago	workforce

2016 Planned Investment Activity for the Fund

The Pro Path Fund’s first investment activity will be to execute an initial landscape scan of Career Pathway Programs, in order to establish a baseline of the universe of these programs, and their degree of transparency, visibility and accessibility. To take this first step the Fund will conduct an RFP to select a partner for this project who will work with the Pro Path Fund to:

- A. Define the minimum requirements of a “Progressive Pathway Program” for young adults (16-24 yr olds) using the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways’ framework as a guide.
- B. Define a starting set of program data points to collect and a geographic scope for the scan.
- C. Collect the data from as many qualifying programs as possible in the geographic scope.

The Pro Path Fund sees the initial scan as a first step, fully anticipating how further steps or iterations will be necessary for the scan to have as much value as possible. In addition to the scan in the near term, the Pro Path Fund is also interested in pursuing these investment activities:

- 1) Identifying and/or developing a Concrete Post-Secondary Planning Tool for young adults.
- 2) Improving data sharing about students on Progressive Pathways so that K12 systems can know who is successfully pursuing them and properly incentivize their encouragement.
- 3) Understanding how young adults make their choices about pursuing career pathways, what barriers they are facing in pursuing Progressive Pathway options, and what strategies could be compelling ways to reduce those barriers.

Pro Path Fund Advisors and Alignment with Partners and Stakeholders

The Pro Path Fund will strive to align with all the great work of partners and stakeholders in this space including: CPS, the Workforce Partnership, Thrive, City Colleges, IL Pathways and all the CBOs and advocates working on career pathways for young adults. It sees its role as aggregating and bringing resources to partners and stakeholders who share the Fund’s interests in a system that supports young adults on Progressive Pathways. It will welcome advice from all these stakeholders, but rather than form a formal advisory council, it will seek input and guidance on specific questions and activities as they arise.