

Request for Proposal: Analytic Lead(s) for the Value Data Collaborative

The Value Data Collaborative (VDC) is the first voluntary data initiative to emerge from the Equitable Value Movement. Spurred by the Postsecondary Value Commission, this movement directs reforms toward equitable access, completion, and post-college outcomes that lead to economic mobility, especially for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and underrepresented Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students, students from low-income backgrounds, and women—and the intersectional identities within and across these groups. The main charge of the VDC is to work with cohorts of states with diverse institutions, including but not limited to Minority Serving Institutions, community colleges, and American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) institutions, to answer critical questions about equitable value, inform institutional improvement, and potentially extend or refine the Postsecondary Value Framework.

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) will manage the VDC beginning in 2022 and continuing through 2024. During this time, IHEP will recruit, onboard, and advance at least one cohort of states and institutions and will initiate a second cohort. The analytic lead(s) will be a crucial partner in this work as they maintain a robust and complex data set, provide technical assistance to members of the VDC, produce analyses to demonstrate how institutions perform against the Postsecondary Value Framework, and support the development and execution of the research agenda.

The following document includes background information on the Postsecondary Value Framework; the scope of work for the analytic lead(s) and the essential functions that we envision based on the goals of the VDC and underlying research; the timeline for the VDC; and the submission requirements and proposal deadline.

Background: The Postsecondary Value Framework

The [Postsecondary Value Framework](#) was developed by the [Postsecondary Value Commission](#) and outlines the clear value-add that postsecondary education can provide to students and society, in both economic and non-economic terms (Figure A1). The framework measures the **value that a student** experiences from their postsecondary education by examining the difference between the investment they make and the estimated economic and non-economic returns they receive beyond what they would have experienced without a credential. It also examines **value for society** through improved public health, increased GDP, reduced reliance on public support programs, greater economic and cultural vitality in communities, and greater civic engagement if we were to equitably increase attainment, especially for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and AAPI students and students from low-income backgrounds.

Core to the Postsecondary Value Framework are the economic value thresholds that measure and assess earnings and wealth inequities over time using a series of benchmarks (Figure A2). To account for access and institutional diversity, the framework uses two additional metrics: a set of disaggregated thresholds (Figure A3) and a set of indices—the Economic Value Index (EVI)¹ and the Economic Value Contribution (EVC)².

The Postsecondary Value Commission tested the economic value thresholds with publicly available data from the College Scorecard and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) as well as institutional data from the University of Texas (UT) System, one of the largest public university systems in the country. Analyses of publicly available data demonstrate that the economic value thresholds offer a nuanced understanding of which sectors and institutions are providing equitable value to students. These analyses also illustrate the vital need for higher quality public data to better understand the extent to which postsecondary education is delivering equitable value.

Student-level data from the UT System allowed for a more robust assessment of whether and how the economic value thresholds uncover inequities in the value students receive from specific institutions and programs. The results make clear that the economic value thresholds equip institutional leaders with the data necessary to make informed decisions about improving outcomes for students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and women.

Since the commission’s work illuminated the power of institutional-level data in understanding postsecondary value, the objective of the VDC will be to expand the universe of institutions using the Postsecondary Value Framework beyond the UT System. The VDC hopes to build momentum within the field to encourage institutions and systems to build, maintain, and use robust data systems so that they can understand the value they provide for their students and launch evidence-driven efforts to narrow inequities in attainment and post-college outcomes.

IHEP and the selected analytic lead(s) will use the Postsecondary Value Framework as a starting point to develop analysis plans that participating states and institutions can use to better understand the value they offer students.

¹ EVI, which is based on the Opportunity Insights’ mobility index, multiplies an access rate by the percentage of completers from that group who meet Threshold 0. The resultant index, for Latinx students as an example, can be interpreted as the percent of completers at the institution who are Latinx and receive a minimum economic return.

² The EVC comprises EVC (\$) and EVC (%). EVC (\$) is measured in dollars by multiplying the median earnings exceeding Threshold 0 for completers in a target subgroup (i.e., Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and underrepresented AAPI students, students from low-income backgrounds, or women) by the number of completers in that subgroup. An EVC (%) reflects the share of the total EVC (\$) for the institution that comes from the given subgroup. In other words, an EVC (\$) represents the economic contribution that an institution generates by boosting economic returns for a specific population, and the EVC (%) reflects how much of that economic return is the result of improved economic outcomes for the underserved population of interest.

The Role of the Analytic Lead(s)

IHEP will partner with one or more equity-focused scholars or research organizations to lead the analytic efforts of the VDC. To this end, the analytic lead(s) will:

- **Develop analysis plans:** In partnership with IHEP, the analytic lead(s) will use their technical expertise to develop analysis plans that guide members of the VDC to apply the Postsecondary Value Framework to their state/institutional data to inform institutional improvement efforts. The analytic lead(s) will coordinate with IHEP and the data infrastructure partner to ensure that all relevant data needed for analysis are included in the data sharing agreements and will work with the participating states/institutions to structure the analysis around any data limitations.
- **Clean data:** The analytic lead(s) will be responsible for cleaning data such that it can be used to execute the analysis plans, including developing and implementing strong quality control protocols to catch errors in reporting and helping states address them.
- **Conduct relevant data analyses:** In partnership with IHEP and members of the VDC, the analytic lead(s) will also produce analyses that support the data analysis plans and/or advance the VDC research agenda.
- **Provide technical assistance on the Postsecondary Value Framework:** The analytic lead(s) will become experts on the Postsecondary Value Framework and serve as the initial point of contact for members of the VDC who have questions related to the framework as they execute their analysis plans.
- **Actively participate in the VDC Community of Practice (CoP):** The CoP will bring together key stakeholders such as, VDC members, the data infrastructure lead, and equity-focused postsecondary data experts. This group will tackle topics from the research agenda and convene several times throughout the project period. The analytic lead(s) will be expected to support meeting development, as appropriate, participate in each of the CoP convenings, and lead relevant sessions at CoP convenings, for example on data limitations or proposed methodologies.
- **Maintain regular communication with IHEP:** The analytic lead(s) will work with IHEP to determine an appropriate check-in schedule. More frequent communication will likely be necessary at the beginning of the project as well as leading up to CoP convenings and key project deadlines.
- **Serve as an extension of IHEP by:**
 - Communicating directly with states and institutions about timelines, deadlines, and analysis plans. NOTE: IHEP will provide timelines, scopes, and other background materials so that the analytic lead(s) is poised to answer questions. IHEP will also be on call as needed to answer questions.
 - Maintaining strong relationships with VDC participants.
 - Serving as an external reviewer for research and other deliverables that IHEP and VDC participants produce.

IHEP expects to publish several products with key findings from this work. All publications will pass through IHEP's review and approval process. Authorship and associated roles and responsibilities will be determined by IHEP in consultation with the analytic lead(s) early in the development of each product.

The VDC Timeline

IHEP expects that the analytic lead(s) will commit to fulfilling the duties above throughout the duration of the VDC from Q1 2022 to Q4 2024. There will be a formal project kick-off meeting in early 2022 and IHEP and the analytic lead(s) will be working in close partnership through the remainder of the project.

Submission Requirements and Deadline

Applicants should submit a thoughtful, clear, and well-organized proposal package of no more than 6 pages that includes:

- **Equity commitment (no more than 1 page):** IHEP is committed to working with an equity-focused partner who has a demonstrated track record of working to create a more racially and socioeconomically equitable postsecondary education system *and* fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion internally. Please describe your commitment to equity, including specific examples of how you or your organization works to advance equity for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and underrepresented AAPI students and students from low-income backgrounds and how you maintain an equitable workplace.
- **Background and qualifications (no more than 3 pages):** Share relevant background information about your organization and/or yourself (for individuals), including your relevant experience managing complex data sets, developing and executing analysis plans, offering technical assistance, and participating in a community of practice. Please include any examples of similar projects that you have worked on, including the scope, deliverables, and, and for whom the project was completed as an appendix. Experience with postsecondary-related projects on access, outcomes, workforce development, etc. is strongly preferred.
- **Proposed budget for serving as the analytic lead(s):** Budget is \$100,000-\$200,000 annually. Budget details can be included as an appendix.
- **Proposed team (no more than 2 pages):** Please share information about key team member(s) who will be working on this project, including brief bio(s) that highlight their relevant background and technical expertise.

Request for proposals are due back to IHEP by close of business on Friday, January 14, 2022. For questions and to submit a proposal, please reach out to the IHEP team with questions and to submit proposals (kdancy@ihep.org and kdibenedetto@ihep.org). Please note that the IHEP office is closed the week of December 27th—we will respond to questions when we return.

During the weeks of December 13 and 20 and January 3 and 10, IHEP will be hosting office hours to answer any questions you may have. Those windows include:

- Wednesday, December 15, 12:00-2:00 pm ET
- Tuesday, December 21, 10:00 am – noon ET
- Wednesday, December 22, 2:30 – 4:30 pm ET
- Wednesday, January 5, 12:00 – 2:00 pm ET
- Thursday, January 6, 3:00 – 5:00 pm ET
- Monday, January 10, 2:00 – 4:00 pm ET
- Tuesday, January 11, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm ET

Please reach out to Kim Dancy (kdancy@ihep.org) and Katelyn DiBenedetto (kdibenedetto@ihep.org) if you would like to schedule time to meet with them during one of these windows.

Appendix

Figure A1. The Postsecondary Value Framework.

The Postsecondary Value Framework

Pipeline to Equitable Value

For Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and AAPI students, students from low-income backgrounds, and women—and the intersectional identities within and across these groups

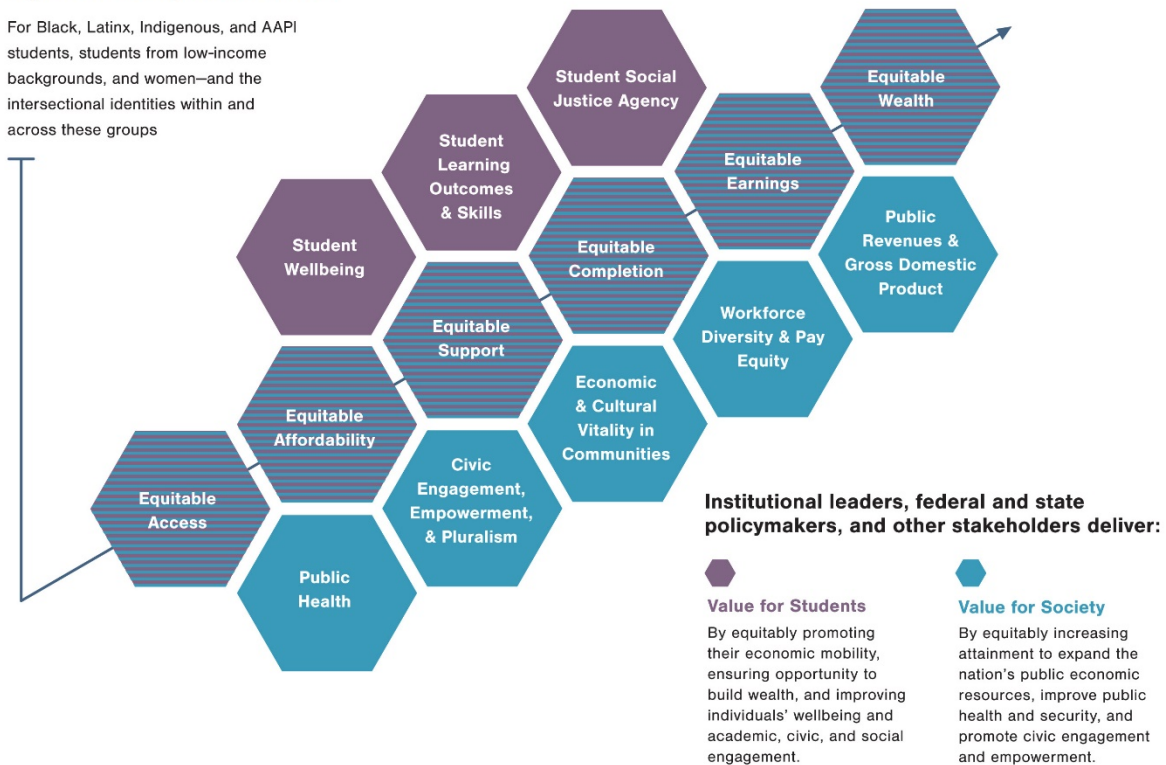


Figure A2. Measuring Economic Returns Via Thresholds.

Threshold	
0	Minimum Economic Return: A student meets this threshold if they earn at least as much as a high school graduate plus enough to recoup their total net price plus interest within ten years.
1	Earnings Premium: A student meets this threshold if they reach at least median earnings in their field of study (or, if field of study data is unavailable, the median earnings for the institution's predominant degree type). ¹
2	Earnings Parity: This threshold measures whether students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and women reach the median earnings of their systemically more advantaged peers (White students, high-income students, or men). ²
3	Economic Mobility: This threshold measures whether students reach the level of earnings needed to enter at least the fourth (minimum 60th to 80th percentile) income quintile, regardless of field of study.
4	Economic Security: While sufficient earnings can create a stable life, wealth is key to building the type of security needed to withstand life's financial shocks. This threshold therefore measures whether students reach median levels of wealth.
5	Wealth Parity: Mirroring the earnings parity threshold, this threshold measures whether students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and women reach the level of wealth attained by their more privileged White, high-income, or male peers.

Notes: Thresholds 0-3 can be estimated at the national level using College Scorecard data with some caveats. Institutions and systems with advanced data collections can measure these thresholds with greater specificity. Due to a lack of quality data to measure wealth, Thresholds 4 and 5 are currently understood as conceptual goals rather than operable analyses.

¹ If field of study data is not available, then the framework turns to the predominant degree level (e.g., median earnings among bachelor's degree holders). To calculate this, researchers can use pooled 5-year American Community Survey data.

² Publicly available data do not presently support the production of this threshold for low-income students

Figure A3. Disaggregated Economic Value Thresholds.

		Earnings or Wealth Threshold for Key Subgroups		
Thresholds		Students of Color (disaggregated by race/ ethnicity where data allow)	Students from Low-Income Backgrounds	Women
0	Minimum Economic Return	Median earnings of HS graduates in their state (~\$26K nationally) plus total net price with interest amortized over 10 years		
0 D	Minimum Economic Return (Disaggregated)	Median earnings of HS graduates in their state who are [race/ethnic group], plus total net price with interest divided by 10	Median earnings of HS graduates in their state from low-income backgrounds, plus total net price with interest divided by 10 (if available) ¹	Median earnings of female HS graduates in their state plus total net price with interest divided by 10
1	Earnings Premium	In-state median earnings for graduates within their field (\$35K for AA holders and \$48k for BA holders nationally)		
1 D	Earnings Premium (Disaggregated)	In-state median earnings in field for AA or BA holders from [race/ethnic] group ²	In-state median earnings in field for AA or BA holders for students who were low-income (1st and 2nd income quintile) while in college (if available) ³	In-state median earnings in field for female AA or BA holders
2	Earnings Parity	In-state median earnings in field for Whites (\$38K for AA holders and \$49K for BA holders nationally)	In-state median earnings in field for students who were high-income (4th and 5th income quintile) while in college (if available) ³	In-state median earnings in field for men (\$43K for AA holders and \$56K for BA holders nationally)
3	Economic Mobility	Earnings aligned with 4th income quintile in state (\$42K nationally)		
3 D	Economic Mobility (Disaggregated)	Earnings aligned with 4th income quintile within race/ ethnic group, in state	Earnings aligned with 4th income quintile among students from low-income backgrounds, in state (if available) ¹	Earnings aligned with 4th income quintile among women, in state
4	Economic Security	Median wealth (\$102K nationally), ⁴ in state (if available)		
5	Wealth Parity	Median White wealth (\$171K nationally), in state (if available)	Median wealth among students who were high-income (4th and 5th quintile) in college, in state (if available) ³	Median male wealth, in state (if available)

Notes: ¹ The data necessary to calculate these benchmarks are not available in the American Community Survey or other Census Bureau datasets. However, they can be calculated with a P20W/SLDS system based on cohorts of students completing high school.

² Certificate earnings are not captured in American Community Survey data due to the categorization of education attainment (which ordinarily includes “some college, no degree” and then “associate’s degree”). Alternative datasets featuring certificate earnings are not available by geography. Based on these data, the commission applied a flat 0.89 multiplier to each geography’s AA-level earnings to proxy certificate-level earnings.

³ Similarly to Threshold 0, the data necessary to calculate these benchmarks are not available in the American Community Survey or other Census Bureau datasets. However, they can be calculated with a P20W/SLDS system based on cohorts of students completing college. Otherwise, earnings and wealth for high-income students within the relevant institution or system may be used instead.

⁴ See: Horowitz, J.M, Igielnik, R., & Kochhar, R. (2020). Trends in income and wealth inequality. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from: <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2020/01/09/trends-in-income-and-wealth-inequality/>