Every Hour Counts New Partner Selection Request For Letters Of Interest

Release date: December 8, 2015
Applications due: January 15, 2016

Every Hour Counts is issuing this Request for Letters of Interest to expand our reach, influence, and expertise by adding two to four local expanded learning systems to our partnership. Letters of Interest will help us better understand the scope of intermediary organizations interested in joining Every Hour Counts. Becoming a Partner of Every Hour Counts offers expanded learning intermediaries the opportunity to learn with system-building peers as well as share and highlight their own approaches, improve their practices, and design solutions to shared challenges facing the field.

WHY JOIN EVERY HOUR COUNTS?

Our Partners report that being a part of the Every Hour Counts coalition is the most meaningful professional organization they are a part of, and offers innumerable benefits to their organizations and to them as leaders. Some of these benefits include:

- Improved national credibility and exposure to leading foundations and education organizations.
- Strengthened local systems through cross-fertilization of ideas and the opportunity to learn from a group of expert peers.
- Greater influence to effect strong policies for expanded learning programs and systems.
- Increased resources for local efforts through multi-city demonstration grants.
- New opportunities to share local resources and lessons with the field.
- Opportunities to participate in national demonstration projects that generate resources for local communities.

BACKGROUND

Formed in 2006, Every Hour Counts is a coalition of community-wide organizations that increase access to quality learning opportunities, particularly for underserved students. Our approach — called an *expanded learning system* — coordinates the work of service

providers, public agencies, funders, and schools, so dollars stretch further and more young people are served. The result: students with better attendance, grades, and test scores; stronger work habits; and more positive social behaviors.

The Every Hour Counts coalition represents longstanding partnerships with more than 1,400 schools, districts, and community-based organizations that provide quality after-school and summer programming. Every Hour Counts Partners support initiatives that reach 240,000 students each year.

Every Hour Counts has become an influential national player in the expanded learning field: defining outcomes and effective practice for expanded learning systems, demonstrating models for scaling program initiatives and advancing quality, supporting system builders through knowledge sharing, serving as a go-to expert on promising practices, and educating policy makers on the value of the expanded learning systems. As the only coalition of community-wide expanded learning systems, Every Hour Counts is uniquely positioned to support system-building communities with on-the-ground expertise, guidance, and support.

The Every Hour Counts coalition:

- Convenes stakeholders to share knowledge, ideas, and promising practices.
- Convened experts from across the expanded learning field to develop a Measurement Framework that describes common measures for outcomes at the youth, program, and system levels. This framework provides a blueprint for coordinated accountability and improvement, so quality practices lead to measurable, improved outcomes for students. Every Hour Counts is pilot-testing the Framework in three cities starting this fall.
- Developed messaging materials to help communities clearly explain the value of expanded-learning, the work of intermediaries, and the role of expanded-learning systems in improving outcomes for youth.
- Leads demonstration projects that test the feasibility of policy and practice concepts, and disseminates findings and tools for replication. For example, Every Hour Counts leads the national Frontiers in Urban Science Exploration (FUSE) initiative which seeks to institutionalize engaging, inquiry-based, informal STEM education.
- Serves as a clearinghouse of information about expanded-learning systems.
- Advocates for policy change. For example, we worked with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse to include language on community partnerships and 21st century

skills into the *Every Child Achieves Act*, the Senate's bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

- Provides local, customized technical assistance. For example, Every Hour Counts recently led citywide planning processes to build expanded-learning systems in Chester, PA; New Orleans, LA; and Racine, WI.
- Hosts an annual System-Building Institute, which brings approximately 15 city or regional teams together to tap the expertise of Every Hour Counts Partner organizations, and to build on one another's ideas for developing and strengthening after-school, summer, and expanded learning programs that engage community partners and schools. More than 300 people from more than 30 communities have attended our Institutes over the past two years.

NEW PARTNER IDENTIFICATION

In an effort to thoughtfully undertake a process to expand our intensive peer learning community we are issuing this Request for Letters of Interest. Letters of Interest will help us better understand the scope of intermediary organizations interested in joining Every Hour Counts. Non-profit intermediaries and public intermediaries that have public/private oversight are encouraged to submit Letters of Interest. On the basis of the criteria we've identified for new Partners, we will use the Letters of Interest to identify a small number of organizations to complete an application to better understand organization and system strengths.

Selection criteria for new Partners:

- Strong and accomplished systems-builder.[1]
- Strong and accomplished intermediary (as indicated by established public/private leadership, scale of influence in the system, diversified funding).
- Leader (who would be the actual Every Hour Counts Partner) has demonstrated significant accomplishment as a systems-builder.
- System increases Every Hour Counts' geographic diversity and political influence.
- Leader and intermediary demonstrate commitment to Every Hour Counts' mission and theory of change.
- Leader and intermediary are willing and able to meet expectations of Every Hour Counts partnership (described below).

[1] We define systems-building as a coordinated public-private effort among providers, policy-makers, public agencies, school districts, funders to bring structure, accountability, and cohesion to a fragmented loose network of out-of-school time programs.

- Leader and system are well positioned to leverage resources for Every Hour Counts work.
- Leader and system fill a gap in the Every Hour Counts Partner expertise.

Although we have limited capacity to expand beyond 2-4 local systems at this time, we're simultaneously launching the Every Hour Counts National Peer Learning Community, for systems that are more in the emerging phase, may not have a lead intermediary organization, or may not meet our geographic criteria. One of the main differences between the two efforts is that the Every Hour Counts partners will comprise advanced systems led by mature intermediaries and the Peer Learning Community is targeted to emerging systems. The Every Hour Counts Partnership requires a more substantial time and financial commitment than the Learning Community.

PARTNER EXPECTATIONS

Every Hour Counts Partner organizations make a significant commitment in time and resources to be an active member. Expectations include:

1) **Participation in three day-and-a-half meetings and four conference calls per year.** The executive director of the organization, or chief officer, serves as lead and participates in calls and in-person meetings. Every Hour Counts designs the agenda for these meetings, with Partner input. These meetings typically take place in a city in which one of the Partners is based and often involve visits to local programs.

2) **Participation in working groups.** Partners serve on working groups of their choosing related to priority policy issue areas. Our current working groups include: communications, policy, technical assistance, and collective impact. Working group calls are held three times a year.

3) **Annual contribution.** As determined through our strategic planning process, Partners decided to make a regular financial commitment of approximately $10,000 annually. The contribution is in recognition of the value Every Hour Counts Partners receive from participating in the coalition, to support unfunded expenses, and to support Every Hour Counts' long-term sustainability.

REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST

Please address the following questions in your letter. Letters should not exceed three pages.

1. Why is your organization interested in joining Every Hour Counts?
2. What are your organization's initiatives and accomplishments related to expanded learning systems-building?
3. What has your organization accomplished that adds distinct value to your local expanded learning system? What are the implications for the field?
4. What do you hope to accomplish through your participation in Every Hour Counts?

TIMELINE

January 15 Letters of Interest Due
February 5 Invitation to Selected Communities to Submit Full Applications
March 4 Applications Due
April Announce new partners

Please send letters to Jessica Donner, Executive Director, Every Hour Counts, jdonner@everyhourcounts.org. Any questions can be addressed to Jessica by email or by phone at 646-943-8738.

For more information on Every Hour Counts, please visit www.afterschoolsystems.org.