



Youth, Young Adult and Adult Employment APPLICATION FORM

Submit Application to: cddapplications@cityofmadison.com

Deadline: 12:00 pm CST (noon) on **August 19, 2022**

Official submission date and time will be based on the time stamp from the CDD Applications inbox. Late applications will not be accepted

Please limit your proposal and responses to spaces provided in this form. Responses to this RFP should be complete and comprehensive but succinct. Materials submitted in addition to this application form will not be considered in the evaluation of the proposal. If you are applying for multiple program or activity areas you must fill out this application for each program or area. **Do not attempt to unlock or alter this form.** Font should be no less than 11 pt.

If you have any questions **related to the content of the application**, please contact: Hugh Wing – hwing@cityofmadison.com or Yolanda Shelton-Morris – yshelton-morris@cityofmadison.com

If you have any questions or concerns that are related to **technical aspects** of this document, including difficulties with text boxes or auto fill functions, please contact Jen Stoiber – jstoiber@cityofmadison.com

Legal Name of Organization:	Root To Rise, Inc	Total Amount Requested:	\$ 35,000
Program Name:	Root 2 Rise		
Program or Activity are you Applying for:	☒ Youth Employment Services (ages 14-21) ☐ Youth Employment & Training ☐ Wanda Fullmore Youth Internship Program ☐ Young Adult Employment Services (ages 18-26) ☐ Adult Employment Services (18+)		
Contact Person:	Denise Hanson	Email:	hansondenise8@gmail.com
Full Address:	625 Chatham Terrace Madison, WI 53711	Telephone:	(608) 212-6221
501 (c) 3 Status:	☒ Yes ☐ No	Fiscal Agent (if applicable)	

Organizational Qualifications:

1. Describe your organization's experience implementing services relevant to the services described in the Youth, Young Adult and Adult Employment RFP, including to those who are furthest from resources and opportunities and who face systemic barriers to employment.

Root To Rise has operated in Dane County schools since January 2017 and has provided leadership opportunities to over 190 high school BIPOC academic tutor and behavioral mentors over ten semesters. Our tutor-mentors live in historically underinvested neighborhoods in Madison. Over 95% of Root To Rise participants have family incomes that are below the identified poverty line.

Root To Rise tutor-mentors have a profound effect on the students they serve. Serving as academic tutors and behavioral mentors in elementary classrooms across Madison, the tutor-mentors also provide an important example to their young mentees. Because of their participation and efforts, thousands of younger students have experienced having a teaching role-model of color in their own classroom. Root To Rise offers a concrete way to meet the needs of the most disenfranchised youth of color and directly embodies many of the best practices identified by the National Gang Center to discourage youth gang involvement. We use the DPI employability skills certificate as a guide to help students learn skills necessary to maintain gainful employment. The tutor-mentors emerge transformed by this project, as do the students they serve in the elementary schools.

We have been working tirelessly for five academic years to provide these opportunities to those who face systemic barriers to employment. We have been funded by City of Madison grants for this important work since 2017. The City of Madison Youth Division has been enthusiastic about our work and has supported it since the beginning. Their support has thus far covered just one of our program's key elements, the \$500 stipend we pay the youth who successfully complete the rigorous contract we require them to sign for their committed work. We recently completed a summer internship program at One City Schools for which we raised our stipend to \$1000.

2. Describe how your agency builds relationships and authentically engages with individuals and households served. Specifically include information on previous strategies used to authentically engage with BIPOC, LGBTQ+, immigrant and/or low-income households and individuals.

From its inception, Root 2 Rise was built on the foundation of relationships that Executive Director Denise Hanson had with her BIPOC high school students who became the initial Root To Rise tutor-mentors. Currently, Root 2 Rise student tutor-mentor participants are identified and chosen by those who have the strongest relationships with them in the school setting. These are counselors, engagement coaches, administrators and other support staff in the schools the students attend who know the students well, and recognize their potential. We are committed to involving parents and families in the program, and have parents sign consent forms authorizing their child's participation. The letter serves to identify their children as emerging leaders. Parents learn that their child has been selected for a leadership opportunity. We seek parental partnership and support in the process of building their child's leadership skills, financial literacy, teaching skills and community service. With the goal of building community, we hold an end of semester celebration and invite tutor-mentors and their families, mentor teachers, school and community leaders. We have other grant funding to support this event and it has become a powerful event where our tutor-mentors are given the opportunity to take the microphone and talk about their own experiences and how the program built strength, hope and leadership skills in them. Because we know the importance of strong and mutually respectful relationships with the families, we ask each participating classroom teacher-mentor to make two

positive phone calls home to the tutor-mentor's families. We ask that one of the calls be made during the first two weeks of the tutor-mentor's time serving the elementary class community.

3. Describe your organization's experience, education and training requirements for program staff and management staff.

In her 30-year career as an educator, Executive Director Denise Hanson has created numerous programs for historically marginalized students, helping them to attain academic success beyond what they, or the educational system, may see as possible. To this end, she created Root To Rise in response to her experiences as a Positive Behavior Coach at West High School in Madison. She is assisted by a small staff of professional educators and tutoring coaches, some of whom are former Root To Rise participants. Although Root To Rise as a 501(c)(3) organization is relatively young, the Root To Rise Board of Directors is composed entirely of educational professionals with an average of 30 years experience in academic positions. A number of board members also take part in managing R2R and operating its ongoing programs.

We are training our former tutor-mentors to help manage and grow the program. They are our greatest resource, those who have first-hand experience with the program. We hire them as our K-12 program coordinators, K-12 tutor-mentor coaches and financial literacy trainers for the high school age tutor mentors. Our original program consisted of high school tutor-mentors serving in elementary classrooms. Our second program is in support of all of our former students. We offer open positions to our former tutor-mentors first, working to help them thrive in their professional lives by assisting them with career planning, tuition for college classes, credit score building, drivers license acquisition, etc. We pay our former tutor-mentors \$25 per hour to support our younger students and to facilitate programming in new school districts. Our two programs mutually support one another as our former tutor-mentors are an integral part of our ongoing success with our high school tutor-mentors. We are sending two of our former tutor-mentors to a conference so that they can learn training techniques for financial literacy. This is a key skill and one that many students in our cohorts have not had access to. Once trained, they will commit to training our tutor-mentor alumni and our current and upcoming cohorts of tutor-mentors. As part of our deep commitment to racial and LGBTQ equity, each of our board members has taken part in equity training and our organization is guided by the principles of justice, equity and empowerment. We do not require our employees to have a college degree to earn our hourly rate, as we recognize and honor the significant lived experience and expertise they contribute to our program.

Partnerships, Collaboration & Coordination

1. Describe your current and recent collaboration and partnerships with the following groups, specifying organization names, collaboration/partnership dates, and information about your shared work and accomplishments.
 - a. Organizations and groups that work with youth, young adults and/or adults.

Root To Rise has forged collaborations and partnerships with the following organizations:

One City Schools - We established a partnership with OCS this year and ran a six-week program there this summer. They have endorsed our proposal for this grant. We look forward to continuing to run programs there.

Westminster Presbyterian Church - We are in the process of creating an afterschool program with Westminster for Thoreau K-5 students who are struggling readers. Pastor Scott Anderson and his team are committed to building literacy during after-school hours in disenfranchised populations.

MMSD - We have been in recent communication with MMSD's partnership office directors, Willie Larkin and Laura Whitmore, and the Office of Students with Special Needs, Nancy Mollfenter and Julie Evert, to relaunch the partnership that we had from Root To Rise's inception in 2017 until 2021. We are poised and eager to work with MMSD again. Like many organizations during the COVID era, MMSD has gone through significant changes and serious staff shortages in the last few years, but we are confident that the partnership will be reestablished. A number of principals have reached out to us with requests to have R2R programs at their schools. We were recently able to award MMSD credit to 11 of our tutor-mentors for their committed work at One City Schools this summer.

Sun Prairie Excel Institute - We are in regular communication with Pastor Larry Tabron, Founder and Executive Director of the Sun Prairie Excel Institute. His organization supports anti-gang initiatives in the greater Dane County area. We look forward to continuing and growing our relationship with him and Sun Prairie Excel.

- b. Organizations that provide pre-employment/career preparation, employment services, and/or training and education.

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater - Have created a formal partnership in which current R2R tutor-mentors, during their junior and senior years of high school, take up to four introductory classes in the College of Education for students who are interested in pursuing a career in education. This is the fulfillment of the R2R mission to create a new generation of teachers of color. We also partner with them to provide college classes to former tutor-mentors.

Edgewood College - Have recently created a partnership to advance the academic aspirations of Madison BIPOC students seeking careers as educators. We also work closely with the College's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion department. We established a tuition agreement and an agreement for support and professional development for our tutor-mentors. Our goal is to provide financial and other support for this next generation of teachers of color.

Morgridge Foundation - We have a MOU with the Morgridge Foundation to provide STEM lessons to our tutor-mentors who will in turn teach these lessons to the elementary classrooms they support. Morgridge will also host a field trip for our tutor-mentors to UW-Madison research laboratories presented by researchers of color.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction - We have worked closely with the WDPI, which offers our tutor-mentors a certificate in employability skills. This program will provide students with valuable experiential learning opportunities directly aligned with the MMSD Experiential Learning Employability Skills Competencies. Those competencies include: developing positive relationships with others, communicating effectively with others; collaborating with others, maintaining composure under pressure, demonstrating integrity, performing quality work, providing quality goods or services, adapting to change, showing initiative and self-direction and setting personal goals.

Summit Credit Union & CEOs of Tomorrow - Summit partnered with CEOs of Tomorrow to present a half-day financial literacy training; we look forward to their providing further such trainings for our current and former tutor-mentors. We recently attended a half-day training at Summit which was a phenomenal learning experience for four of our team members, including two of our original seven tutor-mentors. We are sending those same two tutor-mentors to an additional financial empowerment conference so that they can learn

training techniques for financial literacy and to become financial literacy trainers for all youth participating in our Root To Rise programming.

- c. Organizations and groups that focus on working with, or have a history of working with, low-income households, women, and those that are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, and/or individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer + (LGBTQ+).
2. Describe your plans to partner, collaborate, and coordinate services with organizations and groups, including names and partnership details. Please explain why and how these collaborations benefit the participants served. Organizations that identify key partnerships must provide written documentation of agreement/commitment from each listed partner.

Root To Rise intends to continue and deepen our relationships with all of our current and recent partners and collaborators for the immediate benefit of our tutor-mentors, current and former, and to strengthen the greater Madison community. Our partnerships with UW-Whitewater and Edgewood College, in which our formerly academically disaffected tutor-mentors will receive postsecondary education credits at no cost to them, will inspire these students to continue to explore opportunities that will open doors in their lives, including pursuing options in appropriate higher education. Our data indicates that a significant number of our tutor-mentors will pursue education as a career as a direct result of their participation in Root To Rise. Our incipient partnership with Westminster Presbyterian Church will help both our tutor-mentors and the K-5 students they support to appreciate the intrinsic value of the written word. Through this partnership, we will also hire Root to Rise alumni (who themselves are interested in becoming educators) to manage the program. The Morgridge STEM presentations will inspire our tutor-mentors to realize how important these disciplines are to modern life. The establishment and growth of One City Schools over the past decade has been nothing short of phenomenal and Root To Rise is proud to be in partnership as both organizations strive to eliminate the racial disparities endemic in our community and larger society. Pastor Larry Tabron's Sun Prairie Excel Institute (SPEI) has taken a strong initiative in anti-gang work in Dane County and, though Root To Rise does not identify SPEI as a key partner at this time, we know that our program and SPEI will be working closely in the future to help discourage gang and other dangerous behaviors in our young people. Our partnership with the City of Madison and MMSD provided the base of operations from the beginning of Root To Rise. Through our mutual efforts, hundreds of K-8 students have experienced having an instructor of color in their classrooms. We look forward to restarting those efforts for the benefit of more MMSD students. Given the success of our recent financial literacy training with Summit Credit Union and CEOs of Tomorrow, we look forward to continuing to improve the financial knowledge and aspirations of our students and to creating more formal partnerships with both organizations.

Program Design

1. Describe the organization's program and proposed service delivery plan including recruitment and selection of participants, individual assessment process, anticipated number to be served, who will be served, duration, location, and goals.

Root To Rise is a strengths-based program in which students of color are placed in their neighborhood elementary or middle schools, one student per classroom, under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher (preferably a former teacher) to serve as academic tutors & behavioral mentors for younger students. The tutor-mentors spend

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60-90 minutes of every school day throughout the semester assisting the K-8 school teachers and students with academics while modeling appropriate behavior to these younger peers. The high school students chosen to participate are those who may be at risk of not graduating on time. The tutor-mentors sign a rigorous contract holding them to a high standard. They receive training in tutoring and mentoring both prior to being placed in the classroom and throughout the semester. The participants also receive academic tutoring, employability skills training, and financial literacy instruction. Upon successful completion, they receive academic credit and a \$750 stipend for their committed work.

We look to school leadership, social emotional and behavior teams and those who have the strongest relationships with the high school students in the school setting to select the students from their buildings who they believe would most benefit from our programming. We communicate to school leadership that we are the only leadership program that does not have a minimum GPA requirement or any other barrier to being included as a Root To Rise leader. The students we welcome into our leadership program are those who are often blocked from the PEOPLE and AVID programs due to GPA requirements and other limitations.

This program is a way to make incremental but significant increases in graduation rates for students of color. By placing high school students of color in their neighborhood elementary or middle schools where they would both teach appropriate behavior to their younger peers and assist teachers (often a teacher from their own K-8 experience) and students with academics, we serve several populations and attend to several needs in our poorest neighborhoods. There are three main benefits to this model: 1) the high school senior will gain credit, leadership teaching skills and possibly even content mastery through teaching. They will also gain confidence and income through the internship model where they will be paid upon successful completion, 2) the younger student will gain a mentor, community connection, a higher level of engagement and excitement about school and a greater mastery of content, 3) the classroom teacher will gain a classroom teaching assistant (ideally someone who they had previously taught or someone whose family member they are currently teaching) who would connect directly with students who have a specific need that is easier addressed one-on-one, 4) the whole class would gain an additional “teacher”--specifically one of color in a time when we have very few teachers of color.

This tutor-mentor will be pushed to achieve their personal goals while gaining confidence and achieving greater success in their own mastery of content. The students we welcome are often disengaged, often entering their senior year credit deficient, with a lower GPA, and with reading and math levels that are lower than we would want them to have as they leave our care and face the challenges of college, career and community. The Root To Rise opportunity provides tutor-mentors a greater sense of power and gainful employment. One method of placement we support is to place tutor-mentors in a grade and with students who are slightly above or slightly below their own personal reading or math skill level. Our data shows these student leaders gain significant academic ground at a fast pace as they rise up to teach the younger student. The speed at which their own learning accelerates is difficult to replicate in any classroom in their neighborhood high school. During the remainder of the day when our tutor-mentors are in their high school classes, they report to be much more engaged in their own success. Additionally, they report that they push themselves to a greater level of academic achievement in part so that they can bring their own expertise back to their position in the elementary or middle school. Our tutor-mentors gain a sense of personal pride and power that is sometimes hidden in our BIPOC youth during their 11th and 12th grade years. The experience further serves them as they embark upon their adult life in the community, in their career or in college.

The greatest benefit might be an emerging group of young aspiring teachers. The past five years of programming has provided us insight into how giving high school juniors and seniors a taste of teaching grounds many of them in a potential career in education. Approximately two of every cohort of ten or so students in our semester-long

programs report a desire to pursue teaching as a career. Most of them assert that they never would have considered teaching as a career prior to their Root To Rise experience.

2. Describe the outreach/marketing methods the organization intends to employ to generate participation in the program and to reach the targeted populations considered priority for this funding.

Root To Rise has always been committed to empowering students from historically marginalized populations and we have always designed our programming specifically for students of color, as we have long witnessed their particular and ongoing struggles in our school system. As Root To Rise is a relatively new non-profit organization (established as a 501(c)(3) in May 2020), our leadership is committed to steady, yet controlled growth. Due to this, we base our outreach and marketing on attraction rather than promotion. Root to Rise is grounded in a belief and practice that we respond to schools or families who learn about and want our programming rather than by soliciting or promoting our program. When we receive calls requesting our program, we first send our informational materials to key school stakeholders and then set up meetings with district and high school leaders. Once the high school leadership decides that they are interested in the program, we support them as they ascertain interest from their K-8 feeder schools. Once their interest is confirmed, we establish Memorandum of Understanding documentation with each school or district.

3. Describe how your program includes input or suggestions from target population served in your program design and operation.

We are driven by and committed to ongoing research and evaluation. This helps us to see the ways in which the program is effective and successful, and gives us a clear sense of our future pathways. We have carried out many surveys, using these to collect data from tutor-mentors, their mentor teachers, school leaders and parents. We have also carried out a number of qualitative interviews, which provides us with a deep sense of the program from the perspective of some of its key stakeholders. In one of the surveys, a tutor-mentor put forward that he would like to be in the classroom of one of his childhood teachers. That has now become one of our practices. Before placing a tutor-mentor in a classroom, we ask if they have a favorite childhood teacher and try to place them in that classroom, if possible. This has helped to create many positive experiences. As another example, when students informed us of difficulties they faced after graduating from high school (dealing with financial issues, being able to afford college, getting a driver's license, etc.), we designed a program to expand the reach and impact of Root To Rise and ensure that our tutor-mentors continued to have our support and advocacy, even after high school. As part of our program, our tutor-mentors fill out reflective forms about their leadership experience to be eligible to earn a skills certificate from the State of Wisconsin. Students must score a 2 or 3 on every skill in order to earn the employability certification.

Theory of Change & Logic Model

1. Describe how your proposed services are based on evidence of success, and how you will meet performance outcomes while maintaining quality services customized to each participant's needs. Please include the following in your response:
 - a. Past service outcomes and other accomplishments that validate your approach.
 - b. Best practices and proven resources for youth, young adults, and/or adults you will utilize.

- c. How you will incorporate past experience with performance tracking and reaching outcomes, including challenges overcome.

As we examine the measurable outcomes, we can say that we have fully achieved our program goals. We are confident that these past service outcomes validate the approach R2R has used since its inception.

We have engaged in best practices, basing our work solidly on strong relationships with our tutor-mentors and their families, offering concrete resources to the youth to ensure their ongoing engagement and success, establishing clear goals and documenting outcomes. Additionally, and as we have noted before, a crucial element of our program is its focus on ensuring educational success for and empowering BIPOC and low-income youth.

In the future, we will continue these practices, including tracking outcomes and using those outcomes to guide our ongoing work.

Some specific goals met in the Root To Rise program are as follows:

- At least 20% of the students employed in this program have begun or have expressed an interest in a teacher education program at the college level the year following completion of Root To Rise.
 - At least 25% of the tutor-mentors report that they could envision themselves becoming a teacher.
 - At least 30% of the younger students report teaching as a possible career option after having the tutor-mentor work closely with them for the semester.
 - At least 75% of the classroom teachers report having a more productive work environment while the tutor-mentor was there.
 - At least 20% of the tutor-mentors and younger students maintain a relationship in their neighborhood within the year after the classroom experience is complete.
 - At least 50% of the younger students report not wanting to miss or be late for school, knowing that the tutor-mentor will be present.
 - The tutor-mentors arrive on time to their classroom 90% of the time.
 - The parents of the tutor-mentors report feeling proud of their child's achievement as a tutor-mentor 95% of the time.
2. Please describe current and past success in engaging community members and service recipients in developing and improving services.

Our end of semester celebrations are powerful. We invite all of the stakeholders (tutor-mentors, their families, mentor-teachers, high school and elementary liaisons, school leadership, the tutor-mentor's high school teachers and Root To Rise alumni) to a celebratory event in a bowling alley that highlights the tutor-mentor's success and their leadership in our community. These end of semester celebrations bring together all these stakeholders who support R2R. We provide a full banquet and program which includes video highlights of the program, and a moment for each tutor-mentor to take the microphone and answer a set of guided questions that one of our alumni asks. Parents of our tutor-mentors have commended us on this event; we believe that giving each tutor-mentor the opportunity to have their voices heard validates their service to the community, the experience in the classroom as an educator, and their personal and professional position as a leader. We continue to learn from our community members, and are attentive to their experiences – seeing the changing needs of the tutor-mentors as they graduated and moved on from high school sparked us to offer them both ongoing employment, support in their career exploration, support maintaining clean legal records, support building economic credit as well as continuing educational opportunities. We are engaged in continuing qualitative interviews and surveys with all stakeholders (including tutor-mentors,

mentor teachers, school personnel and the R2R staff) to ensure that we continue to employ best practices and are able to develop and improve our services accordingly.

3. Please describe your plan to meaningfully involve service recipients, including past, present and potential recipients, in ongoing design, flexing and improvement of proposed youth, young adult, and/or adult employment services.

Our alumni and their parents are now our colleagues and our consultants. They are the driving force behind our program's growth and change. As we stated, R2R has developed an additional focus of work as a concrete response to the needs of the tutor-mentors after they finish high school. This grew out of data emerging from the experiences of our former tutor-mentors, which made it clear that ongoing support regarding employment, career exploration and resume development were essential to our former tutor-mentors' success as young adults of color in our community. We also found they need support maintaining clean legal records and building and recovering credit scores. Finally, a vital part of our mission is to support any of our tutor-mentors who aspire to be educators; to this end, we have established partnerships with two institutions of higher education, University of Wisconsin - Whitewater and Edgewood College, both of which specialize in teacher education. We have started paying tuition support in order to continue to offer educational opportunities. We view their educational advancement as a key to their overall success as adults in our community.

Budget - Complete the Budget Worksheet, including all costs for which you request funding through this RFP. All costs included must be reasonable, allowable, necessary, and allocable among the stated cost categories.



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Full Address:	625 Chatham Terrace	Telephone:	608 212-6221
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Since 2017, Root To Rise has been offering its academic leadership program to high school students of color and to date has helped over 190 students develop their employability skills, financial knowledge and educational options. Virtually all of our student tutor-mentors are from economically marginalized families. Our commitment to our former tutor-mentors continues beyond their high school graduation. As young people who have gone through high school, their needs have changed significantly. This project aims to respond to those shifting needs. For the past year, we have been developing and promoting programs to continue supporting our Root To Rise alumni as they begin to navigate the challenges of being a young adult of color in Madison and the United States. This includes professional, educational, and financial development.

This project offers the former tutor-mentors important training opportunities and positions them for more advantageous employment options. It also considers and responds to the nitty-gritty details that too often become obstacles to success (whether it is access to a driver's license, knowledge about college access, emergency childcare, etc.).

2. Describe how your agency builds relationships and authentically engages with individuals and households served. Specifically include information on previous strategies used to authentically engage with BIPOC, LGBTQ+, immigrant and/or low-income households and individuals.

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With that goal of building community in mind, we hold end of semester celebrations regularly and invite the participation of tutor-mentors and their families, mentor teachers, school and community leaders. It has become a powerful and moving event where our tutor-mentors are given the opportunity to take the microphone and talk about their own experiences and how the program built strength, hope and leadership skills in them.

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- a. Organizations and groups that work with youth, young adults and/or adults.

Root To Rise has forged collaborations and partnerships with the following organizations:

One City Schools - We established a partnership with OCS this year and ran a six-week program there this summer. They have endorsed our proposal for this grant. We look forward to continuing to run programs there.

Westminster Presbyterian Church - We are in the process of creating an afterschool program with Westminster for Thoreau K-5 students who are struggling readers. Pastor Scott Anderson and his team are committed to building literacy during after-school hours in disenfranchised populations.

MMSD - We have been in recent communication with MMSD's partnership office directors, Willie Larkin and Laura Whitmore, and the Office of Students with Special Needs, Nancy Mollfenter and Julie Evert, to relaunch the partnership that we had from Root To Rise's inception in 2017 until 2021. We are poised and eager to work with MMSD again. Like many organizations during the COVID era, MMSD has gone through significant changes and serious staff shortages in the last few years, but we are confident that the partnership will be reestablished. A number of principals have reached out to us with requests to have R2R programs at their schools. We were recently able to award MMSD credit to 11 of our tutor-mentors for their committed work at One City Schools this summer.

Sun Prairie Excel Institute - We are in regular communication with Pastor Larry Tabron, Founder and Executive Director of the Sun Prairie Excel Institute. His organization supports anti-gang initiatives in the greater Dane County area. We look forward to continuing and growing our relationship with him and Sun Prairie Excel.

- b. Organizations that provide pre-employment/career preparation, employment services, and/or training and education.

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater - Have created a formal partnership in which current R2R tutor-mentors, during their junior and senior years of high school, take up to four introductory classes in the College of Education for students who are interested in pursuing a career in education. This is the fulfillment of the R2R mission to create a new generation of teachers of color. We also partner with them to provide college classes to former tutor-mentors.

Edgewood College - Have recently created a partnership to advance the academic aspirations of Madison BIPOC students seeking careers as educators. We also work closely with the College's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion department. We established a tuition agreement and an agreement for support and professional development for our tutor-mentors. Our goal is to provide financial and other support for this next generation of teachers of color.

Morgridge Foundation - We have a MOU with the Morgridge Foundation to provide STEM lessons to our tutor-mentors who will in turn teach these lessons to the elementary classrooms they support. Morgridge will also host a field trip for our tutor-mentors to UW-Madison research laboratories presented by researchers of color.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction - We have worked closely with the WDPI, which offers our tutor-mentors a certificate in employability skills. This program will provide students with valuable experiential learning opportunities directly aligned with the MMSD Experiential Learning Employability Skills Competencies. Those competencies include: developing positive relationships with others, communicating effectively with others; collaborating with others, maintaining composure under pressure, demonstrating integrity, performing quality work, providing quality goods or services, adapting to change, showing initiative and self-direction and setting personal goals.

Summit Credit Union & CEOs of Tomorrow - Summit partnered with CEOs of Tomorrow to present a half-day financial literacy training; we look forward to their providing further such trainings for our current and former tutor-mentors. We recently attended a half-day training at Summit which was a phenomenal learning experience for four of our team members, including two of our original seven tutor-mentors. We are sending those same two tutor-mentors to an additional financial empowerment conference so that they can learn training techniques for financial literacy and to become financial literacy trainers for all youth participating in our Root To Rise programming.

- c. Organizations and groups that focus on working with, or have a history of working with, low-income households, women, and those that are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, and/or individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer + (LGBTQ+).

- 2. Describe your plans to partner, collaborate, and coordinate services with organizations and groups, including names and partnership details. Please explain why and how these collaborations benefit the participants served. Organizations that identify key partnerships must provide written documentation of agreement/commitment from each listed partner.

Root To Rise intends to continue and deepen our relationships with all of our current and recent partners and collaborators for the immediate benefit of our tutor-mentors, current and former, and to strengthen the greater Madison community. Our partnerships with UW-Whitewater and Edgewood College, in which our formerly academically disaffected tutor-mentors will receive postsecondary education credits at no cost to them, will inspire these students to continue to explore opportunities that will open doors in their lives, including pursuing options in appropriate higher education. Our data indicates that a significant number of our tutor-mentors will pursue education as a career as a direct result of their participation in Root To Rise. Our incipient partnership with Westminster Presbyterian Church will help both our tutor-mentors and the K-5 students they support to appreciate the intrinsic value of the written word. Through this partnership, we will also hire Root to Rise alumni (who themselves are interested in becoming educators) to manage the program. The Morgridge STEM presentations will inspire our tutor-mentors to realize how important these disciplines are to modern life. The establishment and growth of One City Schools over the past decade has been nothing short of phenomenal and Root To Rise is proud to be in partnership as both organizations strive to eliminate the racial disparities endemic in our community and larger society. Pastor Larry Tabron's Sun Prairie Excel Institute (SPEI) has taken a strong initiative in anti-gang work in Dane County and, though Root To Rise does not identify SPEI as a key partner at this time, we know that our program and SPEI will be working closely in the future to help discourage gang and other dangerous behaviors in our young people. Our partnership with the City of Madison and MMSD provided the base of operations from the beginning of Root To Rise. Through our mutual efforts, hundreds of K-8 students have experienced having an instructor of color in their classrooms. We look forward to restarting those efforts for the benefit of more MMSD

students. Given the success of our recent financial literacy training with Summit Credit Union and CEOs of Tomorrow, we look forward to continuing to improve the financial knowledge and aspirations of our students and to creating more formal partnerships with both organizations.

Program Design

1. Describe the organization's program and proposed service delivery plan including recruitment and selection of participants, individual assessment process, anticipated number to be served, who will be served, duration, location, and goals.

Conceived in 2016, the original Root 2 Rise is a strengths-based program which placed high school students of color in their neighborhood elementary or middle schools, one student per classroom, under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher to serve as academic tutors and behavioral mentors for the elementary students. Having run now for five academic years, Root 2 Rise has its tutor-mentors spend 60-90 minutes of the school day assisting the K-8 teachers and students with academics while modeling appropriate behavior to their younger peers. The high school students chosen to participate are those at risk of not graduating on time. We are the only leadership program that does not have a minimum GPA requirement or any other barrier that would block them from being able to participate as a Root 2 Rise leader. The students we welcome include those who are unable to participate in the PEOPLE and AVID programs due to GPA and other limitations. They sign a rigorous contract holding them to high standards. They receive training in tutoring and mentoring prior to being placed in the classroom and then throughout the semester. The participants also receive academic tutoring, employability skills training, and financial literacy instruction. Upon successful completion, they receive academic credit and a \$750 stipend for their committed work.

Approximately one year ago, we implemented additional components to the original vision. The new extension of the Root 2 Rise mission which is the focus of this grant has grown organically from our commitment to continue supporting the youth who had participated in this program beyond high school, to ensure that they thrive in both their personal and professional lives. Our plan for supporting our former tutor-mentors has three main components, all seemingly simple, but essential for success in our society. First, we will make sure that each has a bank account and is on a path to obtaining a positive credit score. Secondly, we want each of them to have a driver's license and will pay them \$50 to show it to us once they obtain it. If they do not have one, we support them through the process of studying for the written section and practicing for the practical element. Thirdly, we will pay them to sit with us to create a professional resume, along with clearly laid out professional goals. We also award them a \$50 stipend to meet with us for this two-hour session.

To implement this new program, which we have entitled Root 2 Rise: Thrive, we have collected data from our former tutor-mentors about their hopes and dreams, what has supported them post-high school and what has gotten in the way. We have seen that as our former tutor-mentors graduate from high school, the realities of adult life in Madison can often be harsh. Many of them find themselves facing economic hardship before they even have a chance to stretch themselves professionally or personally. As we began to see the very complex and broad range of issues they are dealing with, we fine-tuned this new strand of Root 2 Rise to effectively respond to those challenges. As some examples, we facilitated students' entry into higher education, paying the registration fees for Madison College, as well as for classes at UW-Whitewater. Additionally, we have hired former tutor-mentors to gather key demographic data on all of our former and current tutor-mentors.

We were able to quickly identify other pressing needs that might seem fairly minor at first glance, but can often have serious consequences. For example, some of these youth were in serious debt and thus unable to access student loans. We were able to offer them an hourly wage to work on improving their credit scores. Others were facing potential legal problems because they did not have driver's licenses, so we assisted them in obtaining the license,

including providing them with a car for their road tests. Some former tutor-mentors ran into problems because they needed childcare for a job interview or work shift, and we were able to offer that. We have purchased bus passes for some of our participants, as lack of transportation can often be a key obstacle.

Other former tutor-mentors have had legal issues, and we make sure that they have proper legal assistance to support them and help them navigate the legal system. We have helped former tutor-mentors with technology problems (for example, lack of phone or internet).

In short, we offer a broad range of support that provides the key underpinnings to allow them to continue to progress and be successful. We consider it part of our mission to identify and respond to problems along the way that could end up derailing someone if they are not addressed.

One challenge we face is that the 18-26 year old demographic uses aliases and often changes their names on social media platforms. We are trying to keep a tight database so that when we have great services to offer students, we can find them. Two of our former Root To Rise tutor-mentors have been hired at \$25/hour to collect key demographic information.

Building a new and dynamic force of teachers of color is one of the key priorities of R2R. We currently have worked out some partnerships with institutions of higher education so that our former tutor-mentors can begin to work towards an education degree, including obtaining teaching license. We have some funding for this initiative, but are seeking a wider base so that we can serve more tutor-mentors who in turn will go on to serve their communities as teachers.

The greatest positive outcome of R2R may well be the creation of an emerging group of young aspiring BIPOC teachers. The pilot program has provided us insight into how getting high school seniors a taste of teaching can ground them in a potential career. About two out of every cohort of ten or so tutor-mentors in our semester programs report an interest in pursuing teaching as a career. .

2. Describe the outreach/marketing methods the organization intends to employ to generate participation in the program and to reach the targeted populations considered priority for this funding.

Root To Rise has become fairly well known among students at the different schools where we have operated, and so we have not needed to do much outreach beyond this, as students, families and school staff have sought us out. We have been approached by young people of color who did not have the opportunity to participate in Root To Rise during high school, and are looking for support. We are absolutely willing to support these youth as if they were our alumni.

Our greatest outreach, then, is with our alumni. We are focused on doing what it takes to make sure they are thriving in their professional and personal lives and their stories speak volumes to others about our work and mission.

One of our challenges is to keep in touch with our former students as some of them move often and/or change their names on social media platforms. Nevertheless, we are committed to tracking each of them down to ensure that we can help them accomplish important life tasks such as obtaining their driver's license, as driving without a valid license can lead to all sorts of legal issues, often with serious financial impact.

In addition to our work helping them secure driver's licenses, we have worked on increasing their financial literacy so that they are aware, for example, of how a bank account (which most of them do not have) can help immeasurably in obtaining a good credit score.

Root To Rise has always been committed to empowering students from historically marginalized populations and we have designed our programming specifically for students of color, as we have long witnessed their particular and ongoing struggles in our school system. As Root To Rise is a relatively new non-profit organization (established as a 501(c)(3) in May 2020), our leadership is committed to steady, yet controlled growth. Due to this, we base our outreach and marketing on attraction rather than promotion. Root to Rise is grounded in a belief and practice that we respond to schools or families who learn about and want our programming rather than by soliciting or promoting our program. When we receive calls requesting our program, we first send our informational materials to key school stakeholders and then set up meetings with district and high school leaders. Once the high school leadership decides that they are interested in the program, we support them as they ascertain interest from their K-8 feeder schools. Once their interest is confirmed, we establish Memorandum of Understanding documentation with each school or district.

3. Describe how your program includes input or suggestions from target population served in your program design and operation.

We engage in ongoing qualitative research (survey, interviews, etc.), collecting data from our Root To Rise participants and alumni. We then use this data to inform and guide our next steps. We have also carried out a number of qualitative interviews, which provides us with a deep sense of the program from the perspective of some of its key stakeholders.

Some of our concrete responses to challenges that former tutor-mentors face come from their suggestions or comments.

For example, we have been asked to help someone recover their credit. A young man had to face the fact that his father was imprisoned while he was a senior in high school. He then had to move from his mother's home as she was unable to care for him. Previous to moving out he had been given a credit card by a credit card company with a \$10,000 limit. He used this to live on with no idea of the implications of not paying monthly. We were able to work on credit recovery with him, and get him back on a safe financial track.

While other young people may avoid similar situations because of knowledge they gained within their families, or are able to rely on family assistance if they do overextend themselves, we realize that our tutor-mentors (both current and former) simply do not have that kind of built-in support and thus we do all that we can to provide it to them through this program.

As another example, when students informed us of difficulties they faced after graduating from high school (dealing with financial issues, being able to afford college, getting a driver's license, etc.), we designed a program to expand the reach and impact of Root To Rise and ensure that our tutor-mentors continue to have our support and advocacy, even after high school.

As part of our program, our tutor-mentors fill out reflective forms about their leadership experience to be eligible to earn a skills certificate from the State of Wisconsin. Students must score a 2 or 3 on every skill in order to earn the employability skills certificate.

We are driven by and committed to ongoing research and evaluation. This helps us to see the ways in which our program is effective and successful, and gives us a clear sense of our future pathways.

Theory of Change & Logic Model

1. Describe how your proposed services are based on evidence of success, and how you will meet performance outcomes while maintaining quality services customized to each participant's needs. Please include the following in your response:

- a. Past service outcomes and other accomplishments that validate your approach.
- b. Best practices and proven resources for youth, young adults, and/or adults you will utilize.
- c. How you will incorporate past experience with performance tracking and reaching outcomes, including challenges overcome.

As our tutor-mentors moved beyond high school, we saw the very complex and broad range of issues they were dealing with and we began to fine tune this new strand of Root To Rise to effectively respond to those challenges. We have paid the registration fees for Madison College, as well as for classes at UW-Whitewater. We have hired former tutor-mentors to gather key demographic data that will inform our future steps.

We were able to quickly identify other pressing needs. For example, some of the youth were in serious debt and unable to access student loans because of that. We were able to offer them an hourly wage to work on improving their credit scores. Others were facing potential legal problems because they did not have driver's licenses, so we assisted them in obtaining the license, including providing them with a car for their road tests. Some former tutor-mentors ran into problems because they needed childcare for a job interview or work shift, and we were able to offer that. We have purchased bus passes for some of our participants, as the lack of transportation can often be a key obstacle.

Other former tutor-mentors have had legal issues, and we ensure that they have proper legal assistance to support them and help them navigate the legal system. We have also helped former tutor-mentors with technology problems (for example, lack of phone or internet).

One challenge we have to overcome is that the 18-26 year old demographic is one that uses aliases and often changes their names on social media platforms. We are trying to keep a tight database so that when we have great services to offer students, we can find them. Two of our former Root To Rise tutor-mentors have been hired at \$25 an hour to locate and collect demographic data from each of the 190 students who have completed our program.

In short, we offer a broad range of support that provides the key underpinnings to allow them to continue to progress and be successful.

2. Please describe current and past success in engaging community members and service recipients in developing and improving services.

A key success of the program has been its the realization of the vision to offer our former tutor-mentors what they need to be successful. We have gone beyond the project's original scope because we saw the necessity to do just that. As a result, our tutor-mentors (both current and former) are highly invested in the program because they see the immediate and direct results in the personal, financial and professional lives..

3. Please describe your plan to meaningfully involve service recipients, including past, present and potential recipients, in ongoing design, flexing and improvement of proposed youth, young adult, and/or adult employment services.

To a significant degree, this is already happening. Our mission is highly collaborative and built from the ground up. We are committed to listening carefully to our tutor-mentors and honoring their perspectives as we make program adjustments. We routinely check in with project stakeholders and make adjustments as necessary. As the Root to

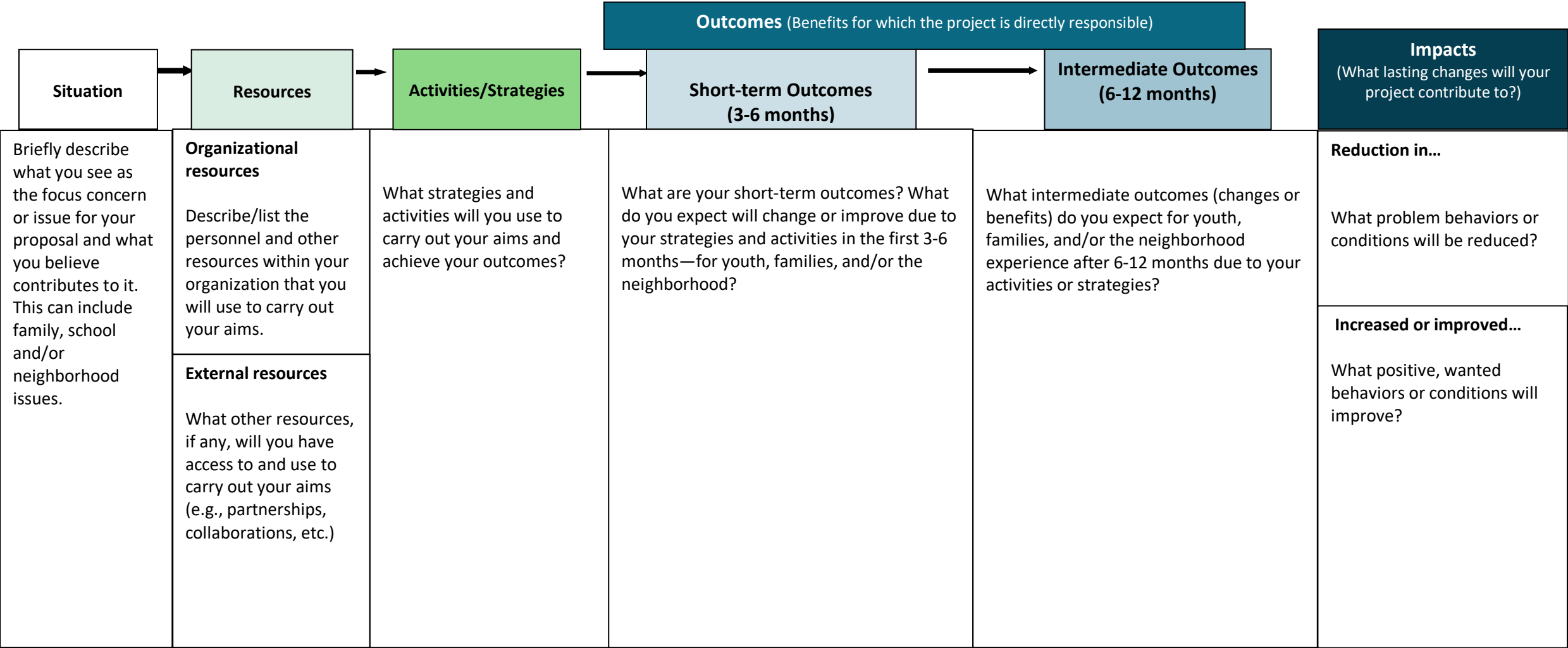
Rise project expands, we continue to work with our former tutor-mentors, though the program now sees them as adults, and helps them to put in place all the structural underpinnings for success.

We continue to use the qualitative data collected to guide and fine-tune our program, and we put a great deal of stock in what our participants say and in their sense of what they believe the program could, or should, offer them.

Budget - Complete the Budget Worksheet, including all costs for which you request funding through this RFP. All costs included must be reasonable, allowable, necessary, and allocable among the stated cost categories.

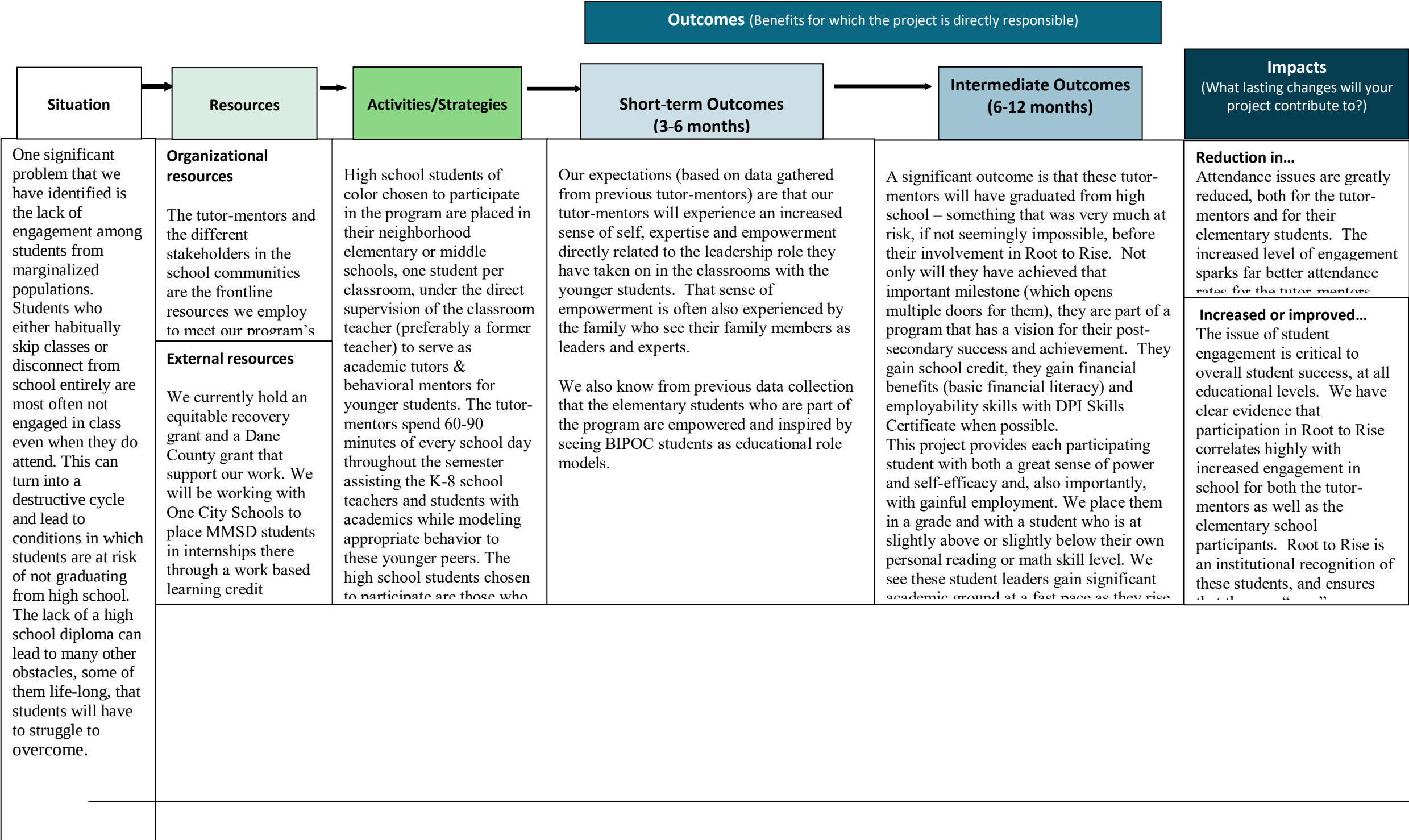
Appendix B: Logic Model

Logic Model Template:
The following logic model template should be used by applicants applying for funds to support youth, young adult & adult employment and training initiatives. Any content over the 3 page limit will not be considered by reviewers. Below is a brief definition of each required logic model component.

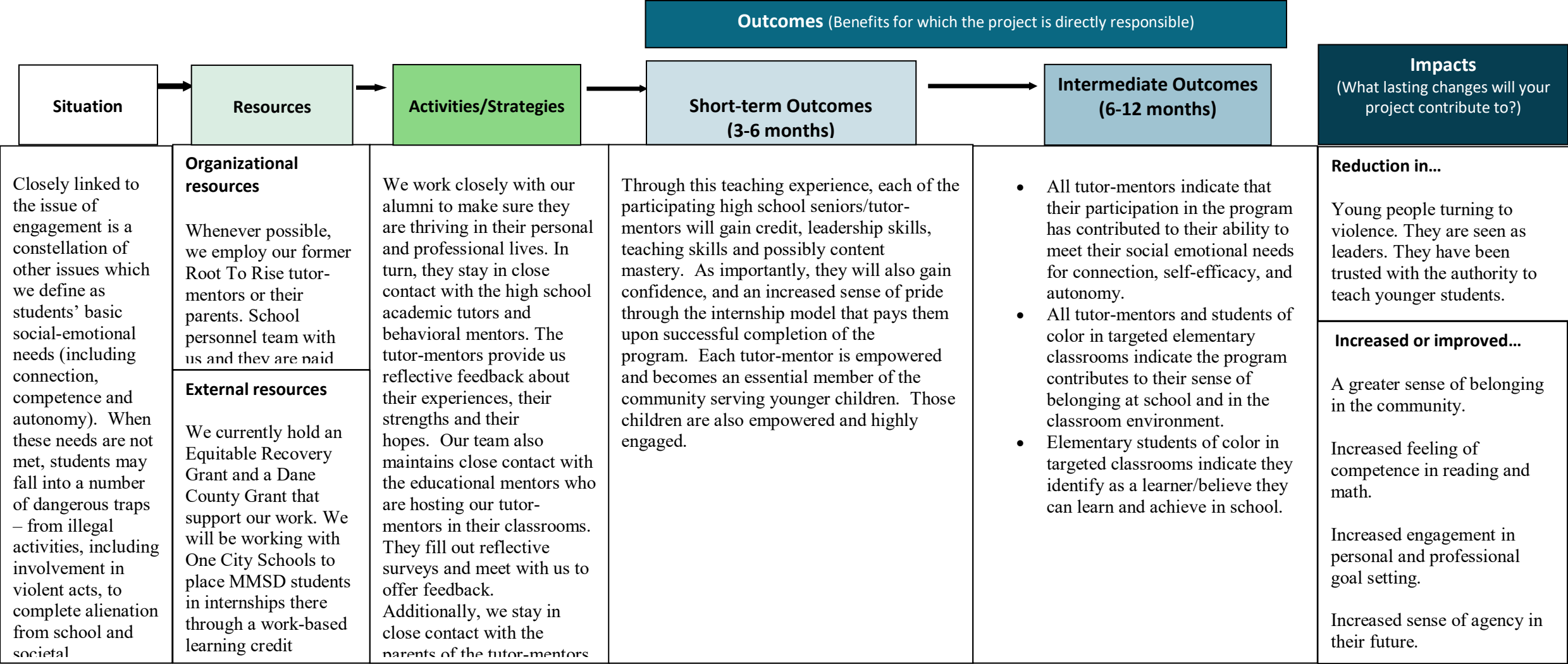


Possible Sources of Evidence	Survey Data?	School Data?	Crime Data?	Family Reports?	Focus Group Data?	Interview Data?	Other Data?
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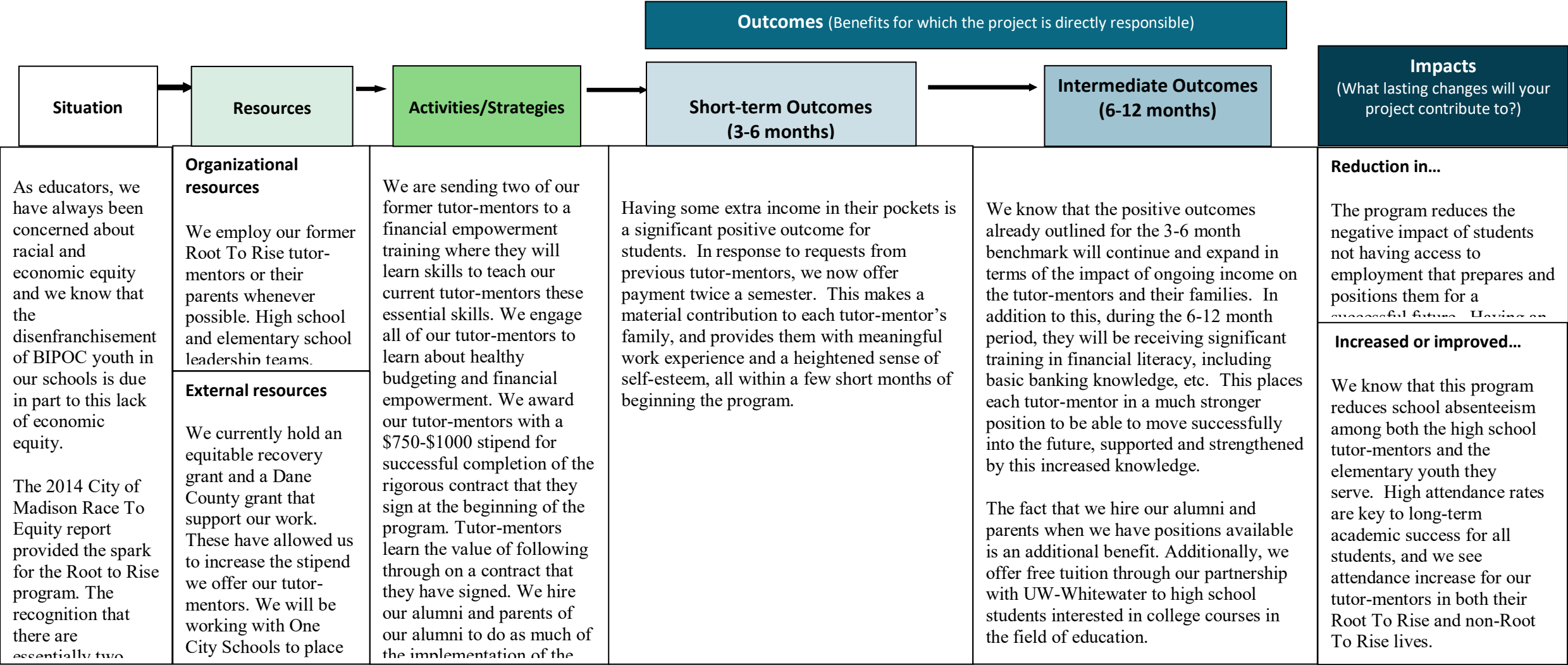
Appendix B: Logic Model



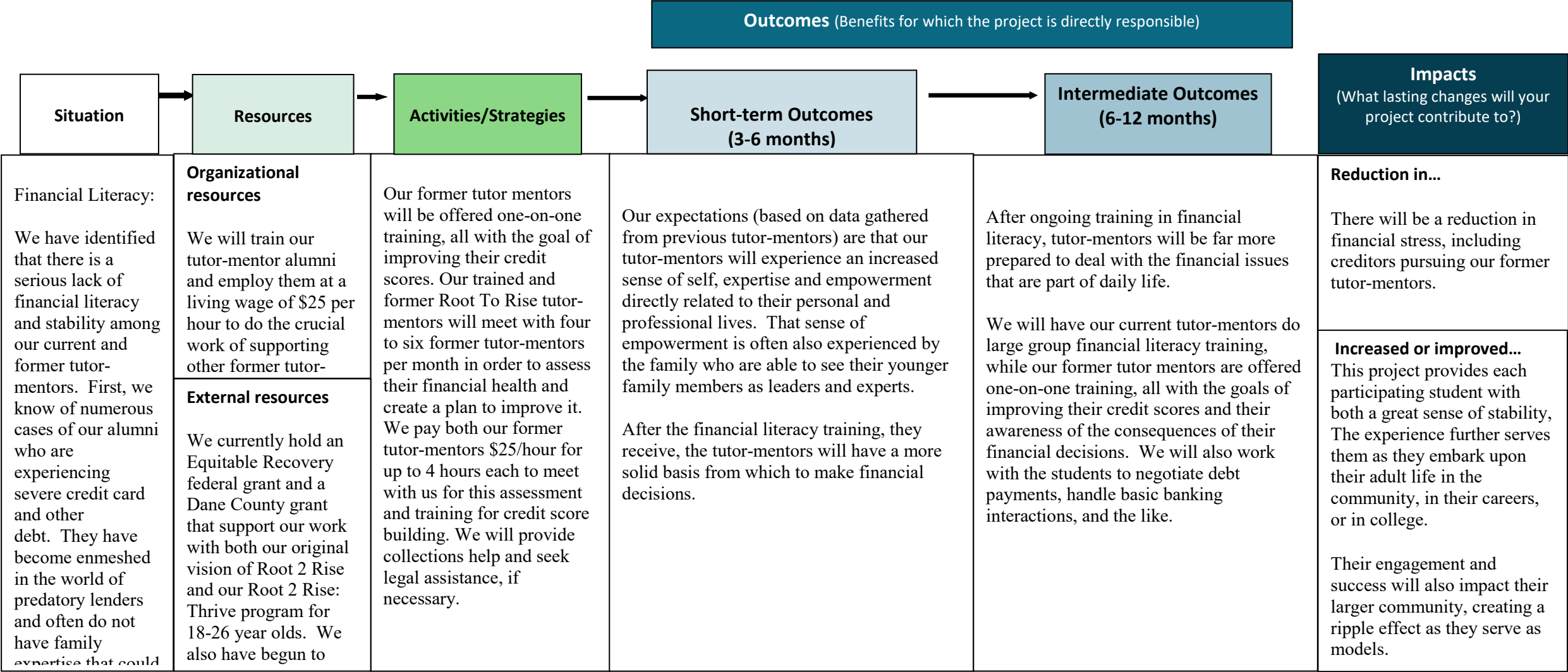
Appendix B: Logic Model



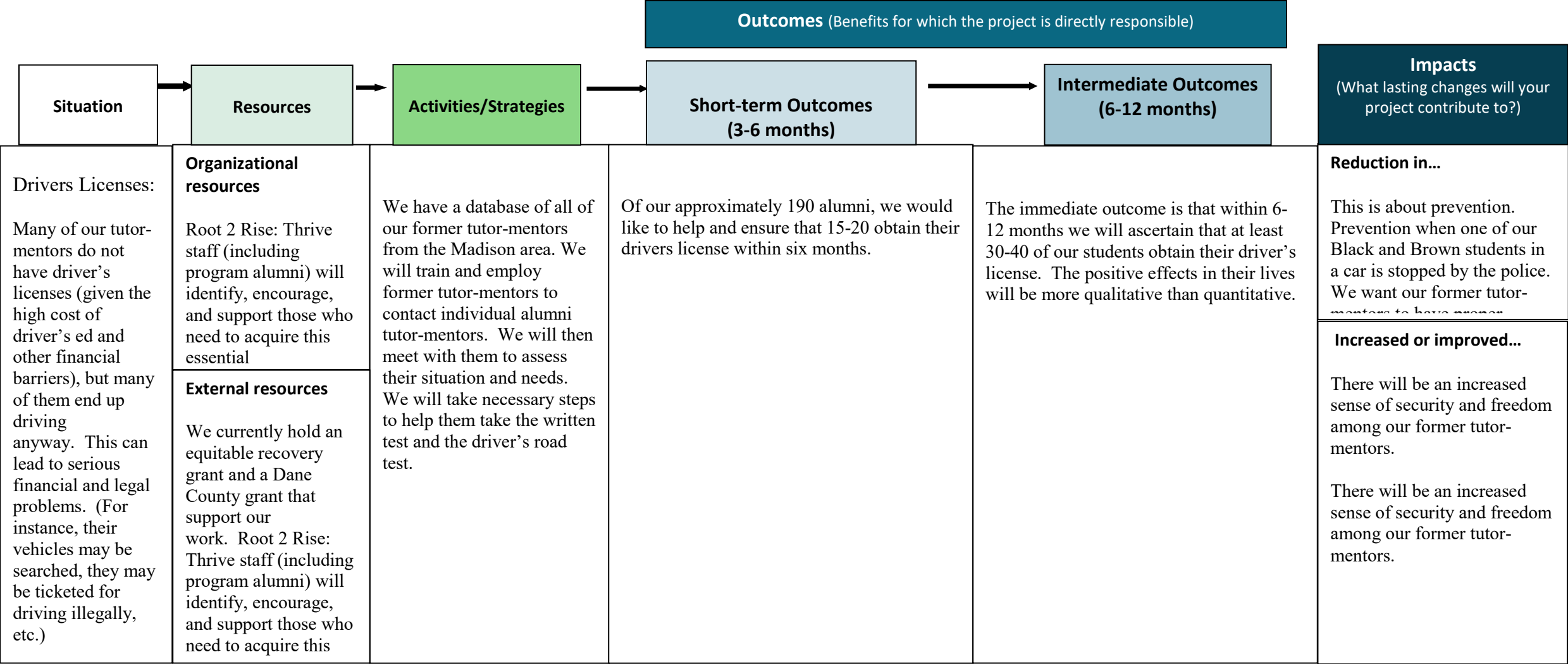
Appendix B: Logic Model



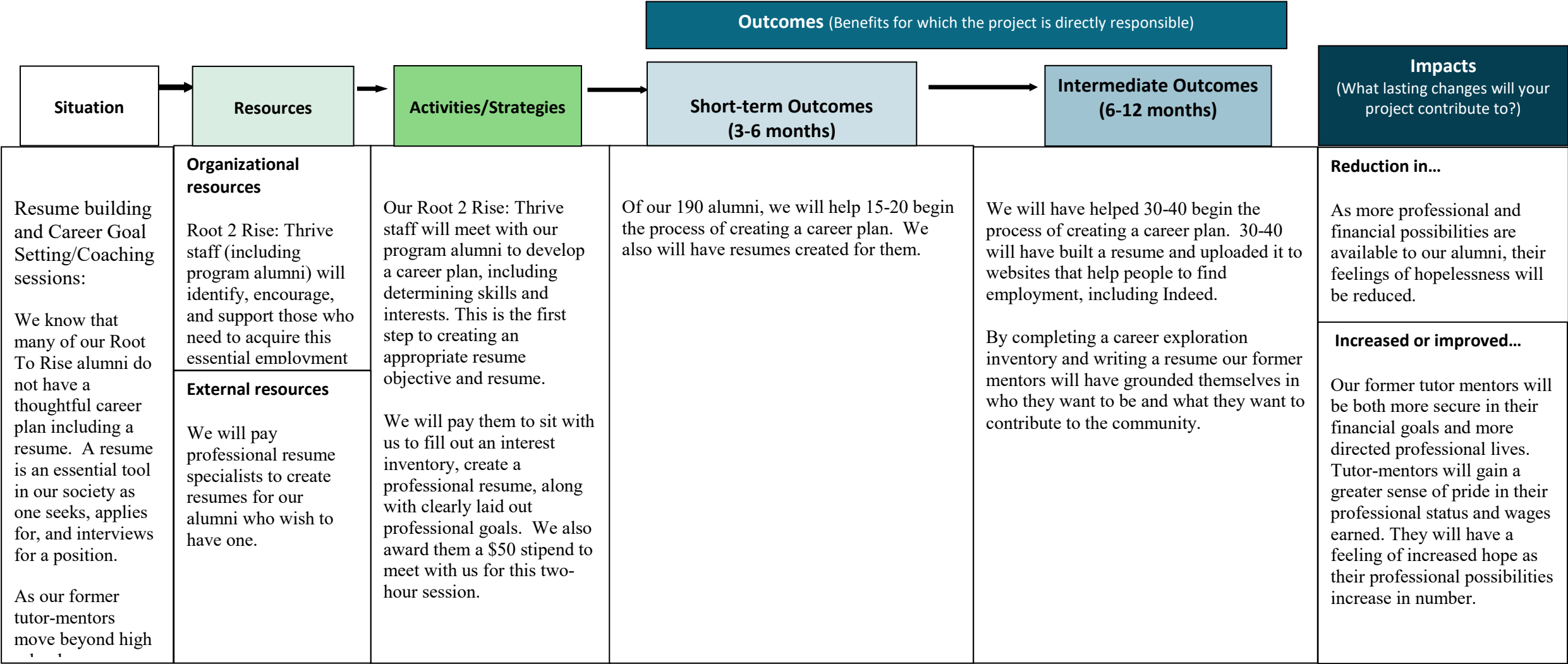
Appendix B: Logic Model



Appendix B: Logic Model



Appendix B: Logic Model





April 14, 2022

Dear Program Officers and Members of the Selection Committee,

On behalf of Edgewood College we offer this letter of support and commitment for the inclusion of our undergraduate programs in the Root 2 Rise application to the State of Wisconsin Workforce Development Grant. The collaboration with the Root 2 Rise nonprofit organization establishes a mutually beneficial partnership between the College and Root 2 Rise in serving the needs of diverse students and their communities.

The undergraduate programs at Edgewood College will admit up to four graduates of the Root 2 Rise program as candidates in our undergraduate programs. These programs will be offered at our published tuition rates, and all available forms of federal, state, and institutional grants and financial aid will be applied to the extent each student is eligible. In addition, Edgewood College agrees to extend, if needed, Conditional Admission for up to four graduates of the Root 2 Rise program per academic year. Students who matriculate through Conditional Admission will have additional responsibilities and receive additional supports.

For the duration of this grant period, Edgewood College will provide in-kind personnel time and resources for students to work with Career Services (e.g. resume writing), Learning Lab support services, and our Associate Dean for Student Persistence and Success.

In addition, through our Office of Mission, Values, and Inclusion, Edgewood College will provide in-kind personnel time and resources through the significant time commitment of the Executive Director for Student Equity and Inclusion, a professional staff member who will offer several layers of support including personalized academic advising, career exploration guidance, assistance with registration and course selection, and other student services in order to build a bridge between these scholars and diverse facets of campus life and facilitate strong engagement in the Edgewood College community.

For the duration of this grant, the Division of Education will also provide in-kind personnel time and resources based out of our Division of Education programs, such as tutoring/support for the Wisconsin Foundations of Reading Test for licensure candidates, advising support, supervision support (i.e., observation, mentoring, and coaching) for practicum and student teaching placements, and support for documentation of meeting licensure standards and completion of degree and certification requirements.

Edgewood College remains dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion as we continue to live into our Dominican values of truth, justice, compassion, community, and partnership.

We are grateful for this opportunity to bring these values to bear as we build our partnership with Root 2 Rise in identifying and licensing diverse candidates for the teaching profession in this time of extreme need in school districts throughout the state. We are committed to making continued progress in building the educational workforce in Wisconsin and appreciate your strong consideration of this grant proposal to support this critical work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew P. Manion". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Andrew P. Manion, Ph.D.
President



April 14, 2022

To: Wisconsin Workforce Innovation Grant Program Reviewers

From: Interim Dean Lana Collet-Klingenberg, College of Education and Professional Studies

Re: Letter of Commitment for Root 2 Rise Workforce Innovation Grant Proposal

As Interim Dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, I heartily support the innovative grant proposal being submitted by Root 2 Rise to increase the number of teachers of color and expand career pathways for disadvantaged youth. The schools in our state are facing a teacher shortage of epic proportions. To be clear, there was a teacher shortage prior to the pandemic, but it has since reached a critical point that is affecting the ability of some school districts to even keep their doors open due to a lack of staffing. To give insight into just how critical the teacher shortage is, in the 2020-21 school year there are 3681 educators working on emergency license (meaning they did not meet qualifications for initial teacher license at the time of hire). Of these, nearly half (i.e., 1214) were for cross-categorical special education, 572 were for regular education, and 337 were for elementary-middle education teachers. Our college recently queried our partner school districts about their biggest shortage areas and they told us that their top needs were for special education teachers, substitute teachers, English as a Second Language teachers and Special Education paraprofessionals. They also identified needs in Secondary Math, Science, and Social Studies, as well as in Bilingual Education, Technical Education teachers, and more.

The statistics regarding the diversity of educators in our state are sobering. According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, between 2009 and 2019, the number of students of color in public K-12 schools increased by 28.2% and the percentage of teachers of color as a share of all teachers increased by only 1.1 percentage points. The gap between students and teachers of color appears to be growing, with a gap of 19.1 percentage points in 2009 and 25.1 percentage point in 2019. Research suggests that not only does having greater diversity in the teacher workforce improve academic outcomes for students of color, but that it improves outcomes for all learners (Chapman, A., and Brown, A., 2020. A teacher who looks like me: Examining racial diversity in Wisconsin's teacher workforce and the student-to-teacher pipeline. Wisconsin Policy Forum. Retrieved April 1, 2022 https://wispolicyforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/TeacherWhoLooksLikeMe_FullReport.pdf).

This past year our college participated in a UW System Landscape Analysis of our Colleges of Teacher Education to identify research-based ways of increasing both the numbers and diversity of our educator workforce. As part of that work we learned that the leading factor keeping students of color out of teacher education was funding for college. The Root 2 Rise proposal focuses on creating a pathway that will capture high school students' interest in becoming an educator while they are in high school and then provide them with dual enrollment opportunities so that they can affordably get college credits under their belt; and then provide them with opportunity for scholarships to financially incentivize them continuing on that path as they leave high school is brilliant.

As a partner in the proposed project we commit to work with the schools in which Root 2 Rise students are enrolled to provide early college credit classes in education to participating high school students. The courses we will offer will, of course meet requirements of teacher education programs on our campus, but are also highly transferable courses, so most students would be able to apply them to programs at other campuses as well. In their grant proposal, Root 2 Rise writes about also providing high school students with concurrent experience in classrooms (e.g., as volunteer teacher assistants). Our campus can also offer these high school students, who have enrolled in our dual enrollment classes, priority enrollment in our pre-college experiences for students interested in becoming educators. These include the I Want to be a Teacher camp for high school students, and the Future Teacher Program, a bridge program and first-



year experience program for incoming college students in education. An additional element of the Root 2 Rise proposal is to provide extra layers of support to facilitate success for their students who attend UW-Whitewater in a teacher education program after high school. To that end, they intend to hire a staff person to support students as they transition to campus. Our in-kind support will be to provide an office for this support person and meeting spaces/classrooms as necessary for their work with students.

In conclusion, we are very excited about the Root 2 Rise grant proposal and the possibility of partnering with central Wisconsin school districts to increase the number and diversity of high school students choosing to go into the wonderful field of PK—12 education!

Sincerely,

Lana Collet-Klingenberg

Lana L. Collet-Klingenberg, Ph.D., BCBA
Interim Dean
President, Wisconsin Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
Aspiring Educators Student Organization Advisor

[She/her/hers](#) (click on link to learn more)
colletkl@uww.edu
College of Education and Professional Studies
2038 Winther Hall
(262) 472-5380

Memorandum of Understanding



This memorandum of understanding is between the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation Programming Department (WARF) and Root To Rise, Inc.

Collaboration: WARF looks to foster innovative ways to create mutually beneficial partnerships with key campus constituencies whose missions align with our goals to make the teaching labs:

- an asset to campus.
- a resource for developing innovations in teaching science.
- a means of promoting science and research at UW–Madison through community engagement.

WARF & Root To Rise, Inc. will collaborate to present programming to their high school aged tutor-mentors, who will in turn lead a lesson to their class of middle or elementary school aged youth.

History of Relationship: WARF has just recently started this relationship. We plan to continue to build the relationship and provide outreach STEM programming for years to come.

Benefits and Responsibilities:

For programming, WARF will:

- Provide training to Root To Rise tutor-mentors and staff on how to teach youth to lead STEM activities.
- Provide a day of professional development to Root To Rise tutor-mentors exposing them to STEM.
- Provide a day for them to learn about UW Madison campus research with researchers of color, when possible.
- Provide materials if needed that are connected to the activity.
- Provide activities or research group to lead one activity each semester.
- Repeat this process with new Root To Rise participants each semester.

In return, Root To Rise, Inc. will:

- Provide student leaders each semester.
- Students will take leadership in co-planning an event with participants' K-8 teacher and class they are assisting. Number of events will be the same as students in program for that semester.
- Attend training session learning to lead/assist in a STEM outreach activity.
- Attend professional development events.
- During events they will teach the STEM activity to their students or be of assistance to research group leading an activity.

In addition, Root To Rise, Inc. will:

- agree to follow the policies given by OYPC following guidelines of programming during the time of COVID-19

I agree to the terms outlined in this Memorandum of Understanding between the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation and Root to Rise organization.

Representative for WARF, Laura Heisler

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Representative for Root To Rise, Inc.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



ONE CITY
SCHOOLS

To Whom it May Concern,

On behalf of One City Schools, we are writing to enthusiastically endorse Root 2 Rise's grant proposal.

Our elementary teachers and scholars had the advantage of partnering with Root2Rise during the Summer of 2022. The Root2Rise leadership team was responsive and accommodating as they worked closely with our Director of Teaching & Learning to plan and implement tutoring opportunities for our elementary scholars and Root2Rise's volunteers.

Our scholars and teachers enjoyed their time with the Root2Rise high school mentors. One City and Root2Rise share a common goal of expanding the workforce of Black and Brown educators. We were thrilled to be able to begin to forge relationships between our scholars and their high school mentors and hope that the mentors have an expanded perspective on teaching and education. One City is interested in future partnerships with Root to Rise.

Sincerely,

Devon Davis
Head of Schools
One City Schools



August 18, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

Westminster Presbyterian Church is excited to be partnering with Root 2 Rise and Thoreau Elementary School to provide after-school reading enrichment for 10-15 at-need students from Thoreau beginning in the spring semester of 2023. Westminster, which is a block from the school, has a longstanding adopt-a-school partnership with Thoreau, providing school supplies, snow pants, snacks, a summer literacy program, and food staples on the weekend (through the Thoreau Weekend Food Bag Program) for families in need at Thoreau.

Thoreau Elementary School has a need for quality after-school care. There are approximately four hundred students at Thoreau Elementary, and only sixty-eight spots at the existing after school in-school daycare, with just four student subsidies. A pre-pandemic community survey estimated that nearly two hundred students would utilize an afterschool program with three changes:

- Affordability: Nearly 45% of these families would need fee subsidies to attend an after-school program.
- Transportation: Many of the interested families would not have the ability to transport students to their homes at the end of an extended school day.
- Programming: Families, school staff and the data all point to the need to add literacy-based learning, coaching, and mentoring to after-school programming.

We are proposing to develop a tuition free after-school program matching Root 2 Rise West High School student mentors with Thoreau students in grades 1-3 that are not at grade level for reading. The program will be coordinated and supervised by a certified teacher. Research demonstrates that students who are engaged in reading at least 20 minutes a day, will see improvement in their reading. It is important for students who are not at grade level for reading to have access to resources to keep them reading when not in school and they need additional time with reading curriculum. An after-school reading program will allow the additional time needed to improve student reading levels. It is our belief that this work will reduce reading disparities and allow more students to be involved in after school programming.

Westminster will provide space at no cost to the program and will raise the necessary funds in partnership with Root 2 Rise to underwrite the programmatic elements beginning in the spring semester next year.

We are excited to be supporting this unique collaboration!

Sincerely,

Scott D. Anderson

Scott D. Anderson
Pastor/Head of Staff