

Early-Phase Competition Absolute Priority 4 (SEL)
Fugees Family
S411C220154
Project Teranga by Fugees Family

Applicant Name: Fugees Family

Project Title: Project Teranga by Fugees Family

Type of Grant Requested: Early-Phase

Absolute Priorities the Project Addresses:

Absolute Priority 1—Demonstrate a Rationale (Early), Moderate (Mid), Strong (Expansion)

Absolute Priority 4-- Field-Initiated Innovations—Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs

Competitive Preference Priorities the Project Addresses:

Competitive Preference Priority 1—Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities

Competitive Preference Priority 2-- Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty

Total number of students to be served by the project: 2,000

Grade level(s) to be served by the project: 6th-12th grades

Your definition of high-need students: Project Teranga will serve newcomers – refugees and immigrants – in grades 6-12. All are English language learners (ELL) and have lived in the U.S. for less than three years. Most bear the scars of war and many may never have lived in an actual house or apartment. The majority will be from households in poverty having arrived in the U.S. with little more than a backpack or single suitcase. And nearly (85%) will be the first in their families to complete middle school.

Brief description of proposed project, including project activities: Project Teranga will replicate, refine, codify, and continue early scaling of the Fugees Academy model, creating a network of public school programs targeting high-need refugees and immigrants. Through new partnerships with districts nationwide, Fugees Family (applicant) will shift from its original standalone school concept—including schools in Georgia and Ohio—to support public schools and districts as they implement key strategies specifically designed for the learning needs of newcomers in grades 6-12. Key activities target newcomers, all of whom are English language learners who have lived in the U.S. for less than three years. Evidence-based components include (briefly): Competency-based learning with expert content teachers; sheltered, English-immersion classroom for full-day content instruction (small class size); professional learning for all, including monthly learning for academy teachers and leaders, supported by weekly coaching and summer learning district-wide for all non-academy teachers and leaders; celebrating identity and differences daily in informal and formal ways; athletics, music, and art included in daily instruction; family and community engagement through local liaisons, events. Newcomers will attend Teranga for up to three years, transitioning to a middle or high school with English fluency and performing at an 8th/9th-grade level in core content areas. Fugees Family will continue to develop partnerships nationally with a goal of 20 Teranga Academies by 2028.

Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes: Project Teranga has established goals and objectives related to student success (Goal 1), teacher self-efficacy (Goal 2), and project implementation fidelity (Goal 3). Mediators include on-track indicators of graduation rates (85%), learning levels (80%), content and English proficiency (80%), and teacher retention (90%); teacher gains in self-efficacy, pedagogical content knowledge, attitudes towards teaching ELLs, and teacher effectiveness in culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices; and establishment of an inclusive and culturally affirming culture. Student outcomes created through these mediators include increased academic achievement, English language proficiency, improved ELL attendance, and improved ELLs' sense of belonging.

Describe how the proposed project is innovative: Project Teranga replicates key components of the highly effective Fugees Family model for newcomer learning. For 15 years, Fugees Family has developed and implemented learning models for high-need students, establishing standalone schools in Atlanta, GA (2007) and Columbus, OH (2019). While proven to work, establishing standalone schools is not a practical, affordable model to reach large numbers of English language learners. By forming partnerships with establish school districts, Fugees will replicate key components of the standalone model, working with districts to provide initial and ongoing support, coaching, and family and policy supports. Key components include holistic English acquisition support; the integration of athletics for all (soccer, yoga, martial arts) as an educational tool; a trauma-informed approach to learning; celebrating identity and culture; emphasis on music and arts education; and comprehensive support of families. Each district will have the flexibility to address its own unique needs while applying the evidence-based methods. Project Teranga provides Fugees the robust and iterative evaluation of the replication and implementation processes, allowing a better view of the impact of various student and teacher approaches, types of sites, new methods brought forth by partner districts, and more. The Fugees business plan, developed with the support of Bellwether Education Partners, guides implementation of a system of Teranga Academies that will be located throughout the U.S. with an overall goal of at least 20 academies by 2028. Identify other studies and/practice related to the proposed project: Fugees Family developed Project Teranga based on its own success over the past 15 years in Atlanta (2007) and Columbus (2019). Initially developed as an organic response to the needs of local refugees, the Fugees learning model is rooted in evidence and reflected in the research related to the following and reflected in our evidence form. Here we note three sets of studies/reports: Effectiveness of the Fugees model (Zuckerberg, 2020); full-day English language immersion classrooms (Cruze, 2019; Rodriguez, 2022; Thomas, 2019); and competency-based learning (Shubilla, 2012). Additional research is noted in our narrative and works cited related to the needs of newcomers and further support the Project Teranga replication and expansion.

Proposed implementation sites: On August 16, 2022, the pilot Teranga Academy site will open in Bowling Green, KY, a small city in southcentral Kentucky. Additional implementation sites—the four districts that will comprise Cohort 1—will be selected through the Fugees greenlighting (vetting) process in fall 2022 with selection in January 2023. Project Teranga will repeat the greenlighting process (Cohort 2) in fall 2023 with selection of five new districts in January 2024. Cohort districts will likely be clustered geographically, that is, within a half-day's drive of each other to keep costs and time commitments to a minimum. Fugees has relationships with refugee

centers throughout the U.S. and is already at work determining the next academy region. At this writing, the state of Texas or the Midwest U.S. (Indiana/Ohio) are likely regions.

List all organizations partnering with this project: Project Teranga partners are public school districts located in communities with significant numbers of newcomers to the U.S. Bowling Green, for example, has partnered with Fugees Family for more than a year, working with us in the selection, planning, design, and soon-to-be implementation and support of the first-ever initial Teranga Academy. A letter of commitment from BGISD is attached and demonstrates the numerous assurances they have provided. By the 2024-25 school year, Project Teranga will include an additional nine partner districts who are operating Teranga Academies within their local communities. Annually, we will consider dozens of districts for these sites selecting just 10 in total for this EIR project.