

**Early-Phase Competition Absolute Priority 4 (SEL)  
Northern Humboldt Union High School District  
S411C220126  
The Acorn Project**

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Applicant Name: Northern Humboldt Union High School District

Project Title: Acorn Project

Type of Grant Requested: (select one)  Early-Phase  Mid-Phase  Expansion-Phase

Absolute Priorities the Project Addresses: (select all that apply)

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

Absolute Priority 2-- Field-Initiated Innovations—General

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

Competitive Preference Priorities the Project Addresses: (select all that apply)

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

CPP2-- Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty

Total number of students to be served by the project: 500

Grade level(s) to be served by the project: 9-12

Your definition of high-need students: 9th and 10th graders will be identified using the following criteria: (a) low grades/failing classes, (b) chronic absenteeism (10+ absences), (c) any suspension, and/or 3+ office referrals, (d) socio-economic status, or (e) being American Indian/Hispanic combined

with one or more of criteria a, b or c. Living in a low-income household, being American Indian or Hispanic by itself absolutely does not qualify a student for Acorn. Only students who struggle in school will be eligible.

Brief description of proposed project, including project activities: Acorn will fund the development of five Therapeutic Learning Classroom-style classrooms that serve up to 100 highly at-risk 9th and 10th graders each year. If Acorn is as impactful as our spring 2021 and 2021-22 pilot suggests, over

400 of the 500 highly at-risk students will remain in the comprehensive high schools to learn skills and make connections that will help them the rest of their lives.

Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes: Goal 1: 80% of Acorn Students Graduate Comprehensive Schools College & Career Ready. Goal 2: Develop Integrated Student Supports to Serve Acorn Students and Alumni. Goal 3: Prepare teachers and staff to teach and support Acorn and Priority Students. Goal 4: Sustain the program beyond Federal funding.

Describe how the proposed project is innovative: Acorn is innovative because it integrates into existing MTSS at comprehensive high schools and delivers dropout prevention, formalized student supports, and research-based learning opportunities for at-risk students. The project will reduce the rate identified at-risk 9th and 10th graders drop out and transfer to alternative education from over 90% to less than 20%.

Identify other studies and/practice related to the proposed project: 2008 IES Practice Guide on Dropout Prevention; 2009 IES Practice Guide Using Student Achievement Data to Support

Instructional Decision Making; Why Students Drop Out of School: A Review of 25 Years of Research, CDRP, 2008; What Factors Predict High School Graduation in the Los Angeles Unified School District, California Dropout Research Project Report #14 June 2008; Early identification of high school graduation outcomes in Oregon Leadership Network schools, REL Northwest and IES, April 2015; Two 2017 National Drop-out Prevention Center publications: Rural Dropout Prevention Issues & Solutions, and The Rural Principal's Guide to Dropout Prevention; CAST (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines; Proposed implementation sites: Arcata High School, Arcata, California; McKinleyville High School, McKinleyville, California

List all organizations partnering with this project: The Yurok Tribe, Blue Lake Rancheria and Northern California Indian Development Council, Two Feathers Native American Family Services, California Small School Districts Association; California Polytechnical University, Humboldt; Humboldt County Office of Education; California Rural Education Network; Humboldt County Mental Health Branch Letter of Support; Humboldt NeuroHealth.