



REQUEST FOR EXTERNAL EVALUATION CONTRACT PROPOSALS

AmeriCorps Promise Fellows Motivational Interviewing Project

Application period closes August 31, 2026

Organizational Background

The mission of Minnesota Alliance With Youth (the Alliance) is to work in partnership with youth to ensure that ALL young people have equitable educational opportunities that foster their individual assets, honor their voices, and prepare them to reach their goals. The Alliance is a leading convener, collaborator, and capacity-builder for youth development, working with and for youth to foster cross-sector collaborations to ensure that all young people have the fundamental resources they need to succeed.

Minnesota Alliance With Youth's AmeriCorps Promise Fellow program focuses on student dropout prevention by supporting students in grades 6-12 most at risk of not graduating from high school. Our theory of change is that providing schools and organizations with the support and individuals to deliver a data-informed, evidence-based model based on the early warning indicators of high school dropout will result in increased **school attendance** and **academic engagement** for off-track students in grades 6-12.

Scope and Purpose of Evaluation

A previous study observed statistically significant differences in attendance rates when comparing students served by a Promise Fellows to a matched comparison group of students not served by a Promise Fellow (Van Norman 2022). After establishing evidence of overall program impact, we conducted a study in 2025 to evaluate the impact of a specific intervention strategy called Motivational Interviewing (MI). This study showed that students served by Promise Fellows who used MI *with fidelity* saw improved attendance outcomes (Terra Luna 2025).

We now aim to conduct a follow-up study to determine which program modifications will lead to higher quality implementation of MI and in turn, improved student outcomes. MI

is a fundamental component of member training and program delivery; however, we recognize that the quality of implementation could be improved by more regular training and observational support as the value of those ongoing supports has been demonstrated in previous empirical research.

Evaluation Outcomes of Interest and Questions

Over this two year study, we intend to provide Promise Fellows with two different types of Motivational Interviewing training and support - monthly MI training refreshers in 2026-27 and access to an online training module in 2027-28.

The primary outcome of interest in the evaluation is student attendance, and the secondary outcome of interest is student engagement. In addition, we will measure member-level implementation of Motivational Interviewing, expressed as the average fidelity rating of MI implementation in two observations.

The following research questions are of primary interest for this evaluation:

To what extent does student school attendance differ based on the method of MI training and support a Promise Fellow receives?

To what extent does student school engagement differ based on the method of MI training and support a Promise Fellow receives?

To what extent does the quality of MI implementation differ based on the method of MI training and support a Promise Fellow receives?

Analysis Plan

The evaluator will select and evaluate appropriate statistical models to evaluate the questions listed above, and account for factors such as:

- relevant effect sizes
- research design/effect structure
- implementation fidelity
- student covariates (race, gender, and grade-level)
- member covariates (like member age, race, gender, and year of Promise Fellow program experience).

These analyses will be conducted using data provided by Promise Fellows members. The evaluator will also review the data currently being collected by the program and provide suggestions for improving the data collected for this study. If possible, conduct

and analyze 1-2 focus groups with members to gain insights for recommendations and program improvement.

Evaluator Qualifications

The evaluator or team must have:

- a strong background in quantitative analysis, with special expertise in manipulating large databases

The evaluator will preferably possess:

- a relevant doctoral degree (e.g., quantitative methods)
- access to an institutional review board (IRB)
- documented experience in education impact evaluations

Deliverables

Contract deliverables include:

- Engage with Minnesota Alliance With Youth staff throughout the evaluation timeline
- Design an evaluation plan for the project outlining data collection methods, sampling technique, evaluation approach and instruments
- Collect and analyze data measuring Motivational Interviewing and student attendance
- Provide final written report on evaluation findings
- Provide regular updates to Minnesota Alliance With Youth staff lead, as agreed upon by both parties
- Provide Alliance with suggestions for improving the data collected
- Submit invoices for work performed quarterly

RFP and Project Timeline

July 2026: Request for Proposals released

August 31, 2026: Evaluation Proposals due to the Alliance

September 2026: Evaluator selected and contract negotiated. Evaluator begins meeting with Alliance team to design and prepare for study.

September 2026 - June 2027: Promise Fellow Program Year 1

- **October 2026:** Fellows receive Intro to MI Training
- **November 2026 - May 2027:** Fellows receive monthly MI refresher trainings
- **January and April 2027:** Fellows are observed using MI and receive a BECCI fidelity score
- **August 2027:** De-identified data file shared with program evaluator
 - Fellow training attendance
 - Fellow MI fidelity scores from two observations
 - Student outcomes (attendance and engagement)

September 2027 - June 2028: Promise Fellow Program Year 2

- **October 2027:** Fellows receive Intro to MI Training
- **November 2027 - May 2028:** Fellows receive access to online tool of MI resources and self paced training modules
- **January and April 2028:** Fellows are observed using MI and receive a BECCI fidelity score
- **August 2028:** De-identified data file shared with program evaluator
 - Fellow training attendance
 - Record of Fellow use of online tool
 - Fellow MI fidelity scores from two observations
 - Student outcomes (attendance and engagement)

August - September 2028: Evaluator analyzes data and prepares report

October 1, 2028: Preliminary draft of evaluation complete.

November 1, 2028: Final draft of evaluation complete.

Expected connections with Alliance throughout study:

- **Sept-October 2026:** 1-3 planning meetings to set study expectations and prepare for Program Year 1
- **November 2026 - August 2027:** brief occasional check-ins to discuss implementation and data collection, approx 30 min/month

- **Sept-October 2027:** 1-2 planning meetings to review data from Program Year 1 and prepare for Program Year 2
- **November 2027 - July 2028:** brief occasional check-ins to discuss implementation and data collection, approx 30 min/month
- **August - November 2028:** data analysis and report creation, meet monthly to discuss preliminary findings and drafts of report

Budget

Minnesota Alliance With Youth's budget range for this evaluation contract is \$25,000-\$35,000.

Contract Application Process and Timeline

Proposals must be emailed to aabel@mnyouth.net, by 4:00pm CDT on Monday, August 31, 2026. The subject line should indicate "RFP – AmeriCorps Promise Fellows Evaluation – Contractor Name." Late submissions will not be considered. Phone interviews or additional materials may be requested with applicants prior to final selection.

Proposal Format

To be considered for this contract, applicants should submit a proposal that addresses the following topics:

- Organizational Overview
- Project Staffing and Experience
- Technical Proposal
- Budgetary Proposal

Upon review, applicants may receive a request for additional information or for a phone interview.

Written inquiries and requests for clarification of the content of this RFP should be sent via email to Ali Abel at aabel@mnyouth.net.