



The Future for Hidden Genius Project Grant Proposal



Prepared by: Natalie Burge

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Hidden Genius Project is a non-profit organization that seeks to transform the lives of black male youth and their communities by teaching entrepreneurship, leadership and technology creation skills.

Hidden Genius's Approach to Learning

1. **Student Focused:**

Hidden Genius is first and foremost a student-focussed program. Through immersion programs, as well as close mentorship, Hidden Genius provides students with an environment in which their genius is celebrated and supported.

1. **Project-Based:**

Students at Hidden Genius learn computer programming through a hands-on approach. Hidden Genius offers free events and workshops intended to assist students in software development.

1. **Technology as Economic Empowerment:**

By teaching these young black men about the tech economy, Hidden Genius is providing them with tools and opportunities to thrive on a global scale.

A. ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION

The Hidden Genius Project is a non-profit organization that seeks to transform the lives of black male youth and their communities by teaching entrepreneurship, leadership and technology creation skills. Hidden Genius was founded in the Bay Area in 2012. The Bay Area was chosen because of the massive amount of high technology and tech-related companies and businesses. The founders of Hidden Genius saw this technology and at the same time saw an opportunity for a long-term solution to an abundant problem in the Bay Area: the high unemployment rate of black male youth.

The Hidden Genius Project was founded on and continues to pursue the belief that technology is the key to not only empowering black male youth economically, but is also the key to improving their communities as a whole as opposed to merely the individual. In 2015 Hidden Genius won the Google Impact Challenge Bay Area grant for our dedication to create opportunities for this community. This grant has allowed us to expand to two Bay Area locations, Oakland and Richmond. Additionally, the impact Hidden Genius has on its alumni gives them opportunities to network in the field, and even come back to teach some of our programs.

B. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research and studies show the multiple factors that affect black male graduation rates in the country. Much of this has to do with suspension rates, expulsion rates, foster care rates, and unequal opportunities.

According to a study detailed on Edsource, black males make up just over 5% of California's public school enrollment. However, they account for about 18% of total suspensions. These trends often start at a very young age. Black males suspension rate is 5.6 times higher for grades K-3 than the total state average. The numbers increase as students grow older. For grades 7th-8th, the suspension rate for black males reaches 41%. In Oakland Unified School District alone, as early as elementary school, statistics show that over half black males are in danger of not graduating because of these high suspension rates (Kapor Center). Research shows that black male youths are suspended at a rate of 6 times higher than white males in the school district (Kapor Center). Furthermore, young black males make up 14% of the total number of students expelled.

Consequently, statistics show that the graduation rate for black males only comes to about 59% nationwide. This stands in comparison to the 65% graduation rate for latinos and 80% for white males (blogs.edweek). These high suspension and expulsion rates play a huge factor into whether or not black male youth complete their high school degree. Similarly, studies have shown how the foster care system plays a large role in the overall suspension rate. According to a study conducted by J. Luke Wood and Frank Harris III, co-directors of San Diego State University's Community College Equity Assessment Lab, and Tyrone C. Howard, director of UCLA's Black Male Institute, black male youth in foster care have a suspension rate of 27% (Edsource).

In order to address the issue of lower graduation rates for black male youth on both a local level in the Bay Area and a national level, The Hidden Genius Project is working toward equalizing the playing field by providing more opportunities for black males youth to succeed. The goal of Hidden Genius is to increase the graduation rate and opportunities for black male youth by providing them with the skills they need to succeed in the technology world. This mentorship program focuses on strengthening the abilities of black male youths in Oakland California. There is a plan set in place to expand to other cities around the country such as Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Detroit.

And so, The Hidden Genius Project of Oakland California respectfully requests funding in the amount of \$142,000 from Google Impact Challenge to support the mission of creating more opportunities for black male youths to succeed. The money will be used to expand the program around the country and provide the best form of education and mentorship possible. The funding would promote the following budget:

Pricing and Budget

Item	Purpose	Fee
Food	To feed students, interns, and staff participating in Intensive Immersion Program Sessions (including breakfast and lunch)	\$76,000
Transportation	To support both field trips and individual student transportation to and from programming	\$20,000
Technology	To fund devices for students to use to build their software projects, giving them the opportunity to keep devices upon completion of the program	\$46,000
Compensation	To compensate students for their time in the program, minimizing competition with student employment opportunities	\$80,000
Apparel	To provide program apparel to Genius's	\$4,000
Interns	To cover intern stipends.	\$14,000
Total		\$ 142,000

C. PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Hidden Genius Project wants to increase the college-going rate of students within our programs. By having a College Advisor Fellow at our locations, our goal would be to provide comprehensive college awareness, mentorship, resources, preparation, advising, and information.

The College Advising fellow would offer:

- One on one sessions with high school seniors
- Advising meetings with seniors' families
- Help students register for the SAT and ACT
- Guide students through the college application process
- Assist seniors with FAFSA/ CADAA

In addition, The Hidden Genius Project strives to offer a college night for college bound students that will, with the help of community partners and family services, have individual college advising, financial aid/ scholarship application assistance, and more.

D. METHOD AND BACKGROUND

Expanding Locations

The Hidden Genius Project already operates in two Bay Area Locations, Oakland and Richmond. Requests for the organization's Intensive Immersion Program have come in from many different places throughout the country. The funding requested would be used to support offices in Los Angeles, New Orleans, Buffalo, Detroit, and Miami. At the aforementioned locations, the following services will be provided:

- Short-term programming in local schools
- 15-month Intensive Immersion Programs that provide computer science, software development, entrepreneurship and leadership training to Black male youths
- Free Single and multi-day Catalyst Events aimed at exposing Black males to mentors, computer programming and pathways to tech careers

In addition to the expansion of Hidden Genius on a national scale, the funding requested will be used to support the addition of a College Advisor. The organization plans to implement a College Advisor by using a 4 Point System.

- An **On-boarding Process** used to gauge the level of college knowledge genius' have before joining Hidden Genius. This will help determine the genius' goals and establish a personalized success plan. The On-boarding process will provide genius' with the following services:
 - Transcript Evaluations
 - College Success Plans
 - Resume Building
 - Scholarship and Internship Opportunities
 - College Application Support
 - FAFSA Assistance
 - Recommendation Letters
- A **Pre-College Checklist**, categorized by a list of requirements and actions that are needed at each grade level. With this tool, geniuses will be able to track their goals and progress, while looking ahead to see the requirements needed for college readiness.

<p>Freshman Year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Should be enrolled in at least THREE A-G courses ● Introduction Meeting with Advisor ● Create College Success Plan ● Join at least 1 club or team ● Start College Savings Plan ● Learn the A-G requirements ● Apply to summer internships ● Must complete 60 credits by end of year
<p>Sophomore Year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Should be enrolled to at least FOUR A-G credits ● Register for PSAT in September ● Take PSAT in October ● Verify you are taking A-G courses ● Stay involved with extracurricular activities ● Update College Success Plan ● Create accounts on Fast web and Niche for scholarships ● If they're an athlete, register with NCAA ● Must complete 110 credits by end of year
<p>Junior Year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Should be enrolled in at least FIVE A-G courses ● By end of Junior Year, 11 of 15 A-G courses must be completed for UC systems ● Explore Major and College options ● Apply to scholarships ● Update College Success Plans ● Take AP classes and exams ● Register for SAT and ACT in the spring ● Register Fee waivers ● Must complete 170 credits by end of year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete the 15 MINIMUM A-G courses ● Apply to scholarships EVERY weekend ● October is a HEAVY scholarship month

Senior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CSU and UC with PIQ application assistance ● Apply for application fee waivers ● Begin FAFSA in October, complete by March ● Collect test scores, transcripts, and list of extracurricular activities to create a college file ● Ask for letters of recommendation FALL semester ● Retake SAT/ACT to use best score ● Meet with Advisor for transcript evaluation ● Complete and submit UC and CSU apps by Nov 30th ● Volunteer work applicable to interested majors ● Send in decision by May 1st ● Must complete 230 credits by end of
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- **College Advising Sessions** will be held in both one-on-one sessions and group workshops that cover topics from Financial Aid, College Systems (US, CSU, HBCU, CC), and Major and Career Exploration.
- An **Exit Interview Assessment**, conducted via Google Forms, will be used to ensure that the genius is on track during their exit from the Hidden Genius Project and High School. This form will

E. EVALUATION

The College Advisor Grant will be implemented using the following measurements:

- As we receive new geniuses, they will fill out a pre-college assessment form during their onboarding process. This will gauge the level of college knowledge they have before joining Hidden Genius. The genius and guardian will also learn what College Access services they have available to them such as; Transcript Evaluations, College Success Plans, Resume Building, Scholarship and Internship Opportunities, College Application Support, FAFSA Assistance, Recommendation Letters, and more.
- The pre-college checklist will be used as a check-in item that the college advising sessions will be built off of. The checklist is categorized by items and actions that are needed per grade level. For example, if a genius is coming in as a sophomore, he should be enrolled in 4 A-G courses and be registered to take the PSAT in October. Along with the checklist, the A-G requirements are also included so students are able to see if they are taking the appropriate classes to achieve eligibility status.
- In addition to geniuses being advised through the pre-college checklist, college advising services go beyond just one on one sessions. Group workshops will be held on a weekly basis

covering a variety of college access topics such as Financial Aid, College Systems (UC,CSU,HBCU,CC), Major and Career Exploration, and more. To double down on accountability, parent meetings and check-ins will be scheduled to maximize the efficiency of college advising sessions based on availability of the guardians.

- Similar to the on-boarding process, a google form will be used to ensure the genius is on track during their exit interview. This form will assist in establishing what resources or services the genius may need moving forward. Once completing the program, they are still actively communicated with to pursue their plans.

Works Cited

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