Developing a Value Proposition

What is a Value Proposition?

A Value Proposition is a concise articulation of the value an organization delivers should someone choose to use their program. It consists of two core components: the Challenge (or unmet need) that the program intends to address and the Approach that states how the program provides value to address that challenge. It distinguishes the program from other seemingly similar programs by highlighting what makes its approach uniquely well-suited to solving a specific problem or particularly efficient at meeting a specific unmet need.

Why should you articulate a Value Proposition?

Your Value Proposition translates the specific community needs identified by your Community Landscape Analysis into concrete goals for your program. This articulation ensures that the community you aim to serve sees your program as a worthwhile investment (and, ideally, as their best choice from all available options). Your Value Proposition will help you make consistent and intentional internal decisions about your Model Design Dimensions and develop a clear and cohesive Logic Model. You can use it in your outreach to stakeholders (e.g. prospective students, families, schools, funders) so that everyone has a clear shared understanding of your program's value. Ideally, in fact, you would draft the Value Proposition in collaboration with the community members who provided feedback for your Community Needs Assessment to ensure full alignment with their needs.

A Value Proposition should address the following:

The Challenge:

- What is the challenge and who experiences it?
- What is the better world you envision instead?
- What beliefs underlie your vision for this future?
- What data do you have to illustrate the urgency, importance, or pervasiveness of your challenge?
- What are the possible compounding effects if this challenge goes unaddressed? *e.g. Failure in Algebra 1 can lead to lower graduation rates.*
- What are barriers to successfully addressing this challenge? *e.g. Class sizes are too large.*

The Approach:

- What are your program's goals?
- What is your high-level strategy for achieving those goals? What is your theory of change?
- What does this theory look like in practice? How does your strategy play out in action?
- What impact has your program already made?
- What research supports your program's design? *Note: this is particularly important if your program is relatively new, because you will not have rigorous impact data to share (yet).*

Assessing Your Value Proposition

- **Is it clear and concise?** Would someone unfamiliar with your program understand what you're saying?
- **Does the Approach directly address the Challenge you describe?** Does the outline of your program in the second half of your Value Proposition address and respond to the specific issues raised in the first half?
- **Does it share clear statistics?** Have you "shown your work" and demonstrated both the magnitude of the specific community needs and the underlying research-based rationale for your program's Approach in detail?
- **Does it reflect your values and beliefs?** When you read this Value Proposition, do you feel proud of it?
- **Does it reflect the needs outlined in the Community Needs Assessment?** Would someone in the community react to hearing this Value Proposition by saying "Wow, this sounds like exactly what we need"?
- **Is it powerful?** Would hearing this Value Proposition compel a prospective funder to write you a grant? Would hearing this Value Proposition compel a young professional to bring their talents to your team?

Examples of Value Propositions:

For ease of use there are links under 'Challenge' and 'Approach' that will take you directly to the organization's information on their website. The language under 'The Challenge' and 'Our Approach' reflects the language from the organization's website.

Saga Education Content Area & Grade Level: 9th Grade Math (Algebra 1) Target: Universal or Problem-Driven Setting: In-School Take-Up: Required Tutor Type: Paraprofessionals (AmeriCorps) Delivery Mode: Traditionally In-Person (Implementing SAGA OffSite Virtual in 2020-2021) Dosage: 45-60-minute sessions 5x per week for 1 school year Student-Tutor Ratio: 2:1 or 3:1 Tutor Consistency: Consistent	
Challenge	**Approach**

The Challenge:

We believe that inside every child lives a story waiting to unfold. But those stories start in very different places.

29.8 million American kids are below poverty level. (National Center for Children in Poverty)

The social and economic disparities that young people experience *outside* the classroom create disparities *within* it.

For every **10 low-income students** who enter high school:

Seven will graduate on time.

Four will enter college.

One will earn a college degree by the age of 24.

(Mortenson, Tom. "Bachelor's Degree Attainment by Age 24 by Family Income Quartiles, 1970 to 2009.")

Improving the academic outcomes of low-income students is one of our nation's most urgent challenges. By high school, many students in distressed communities can be three or more years behind grade level, especially in math, which research shows is a dangerous pitfall on the pathway to graduation.

80% of students who drop-out of high school cite **course failures** as their number one reason — and **Algebra 1 is the course most frequently failed.**

A core problem for schools is how to lift 9th graders over the Algebra 1 barrier. Yet, our large class sizes have made it impossible for teachers to offer these students the individual instruction they need to catch up, or better yet, thrive.

Our Approach:

Educational inequity doesn't have to be a fact. At Saga Education, we know every student is capable of earning success in school, and life. Some just need extra support. And we are getting it to them.

We are a national nonprofit organization that partners with public school districts to supplement teacher instruction by offering trained tutors for students who are falling behind.

We are redefining personalized learning. By using data and rigorous scientific research we continuously learn and improve. We leverage the best of technology and human instruction to maximize learning, to improve student confidence, and to help students feel connected to a caring adult in school.

How it works:

Daily, consistent tutoring sessions build academic skills and confidence.

Tutoring happens **during the school day**, not after.

Instruction is **personalized**, tailored to individual student needs.

Supportive, caring near-peer relationships boost confidence.

Proven, performance-raising curricula are delivered by trained Fellows.

The GO Project
Content Area & Grade Level: All Subjects, K-8th Grade
Target: Problem-Driven
Setting: Out-of-School (Weekends & Summers)
Take-Up: Voluntary
Tutor Type: Volunteers supervised by teachers/school staff
Delivery Mode: In-Person (with virtual option this year)
Dosage: 3-hour Saturdays sessions for 7 months + 5-week summer program
Student-Tutor Ratio: 4:1
Tutor Consistency: Varies

Challenge	Approach

The Challenge:

At the GO Project, we believe that all children deserve access to a quality education.

But, despite efforts to improve the public education system, many children--primarily from low-income areas--are left behind, unable to access the American dream.

Today, in New York City, 72.6% of public school students will graduate on time and less than 45% of students with a special education classification (due to a learning disability, language impairment or social/emotional disturbance) will graduate on time.

To combat this problem, the GO Project serves public school students who are **the most at-risk of academic failure, early in their education,** and provides them with a high quality academic, enrichment and family support program that equips them with the skills needed for future success.

Our Approach:

The GO Project's approach is to target under-resourced and academically-struggling public school students at the earliest stage of their education and equip them with the skills needed for future success. Through our year-round academic, enrichment and family support program, students are welcomed into a supportive community that fosters their growth.

Our three program hallmarks are:

Early and Continuous Intervention

Students start the program between kindergarten and third grade and continue until eighth grade.

All students participate in Saturday morning tutoring sessions, a 5-week academic and enrichment summer program, and year-round family support services each year.

The average student receives more than 2,000 additional instructional hours by the time they graduate in eighth grade.

Responsive and Individualized Instruction

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<td>A staff of certified teachers, teaching assistants and trained volunteers provide an adult to student ratio of 1:4 in our classrooms.

Students are grouped by skill level and instruction is tailored to meet individual needs.

Academic specialists are available for pull-out services.

Holistic and Integrated Programming

Social and emotional skill-building is integrated into academic instruction.

A team of social workers provides families with counseling, workshops, support with advocacy for special education needs, and referrals to outside agencies.

Social workers provide weekday support to students in need by facilitating individual and small group counseling sessions at students' schools.</td>
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<td>**Reading Corps**

Content Area & Grade Level: Pre-K through 3rd Grade Literacy
Target: Curriculum-Driven and Problem-Driven
Setting: In-School
Take-Up: Required
Tutor Type: Paraprofessional (AmeriCorps)
Delivery Mode: Traditionally In-Person
Dosage: 20-minute sessions 5x per week for ~16 weeks
Student-Tutor Ratio: 1:1
Tutor Consistency: Consistent</td>
<td>reading corps</td>
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The Challenge:

A brighter future for students begins with reading. Reading is the foundation of all learning — but across the country, only about **one in three** fourth-graders can read proficiently. If a child isn't reading well by the end of third grade, it's almost impossible to catch up. **74 percent of children who read poorly in third grade continue to read poorly in high school**. Why? From age three through third grade, children are learning to read. After third grade, they have to read well in order to learn.

Closing the achievement gap. While far too few students read proficiently overall, students of color and those with access to fewer resources face much greater odds. Yet data from an independent evaluation shows Reading Corps helps close those gaps. After a year of tutoring, our readers — who include students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, English language learners and students of color — outperform their peers and demonstrate more than a year's worth of progress on reading proficiency indicators. When we help all children become strong readers by the end of third grade, we set them up for lifelong success. Proficient readers are less likely to be unemployed, underemployed or on welfare as adults. And they're less likely to be involved in crime or struggle with substance abuse.

People power makes the difference.
With a third of students struggling to read, it's a big challenge for school districts to provide the individual attention students need to get back on track. At the average school, giving each student the individual attention they need would take 300 hours per week and require nine additional staff members.

Our Approach:

Why it Works
Reading Corps trains tutors using the science of how children learn to read — and then puts them to work on boosting literacy skills. It's nearly impossible for teachers to deliver individualized instruction to every student. But because that's all Reading Corps tutors do, they can personalize their approach and focus on what each student needs.

Evidence-based Literacy Interventions
Our tutors work one-on-one and in small groups with readers from age 3 through grade 3, using evidence-based literacy interventions created by experts. The result: Struggling readers make incredible gains that are evident on assessments. (Another wonderful result: many of our talented tutors go on to become teachers themselves!)

Data-Driven Decisions
Data is at the core of the Reading Corps model. Tutors use research-based assessments to monitor their students' progress and work with coaches to make sure they're providing the right instruction to each child.

The Secret Sauce: Training and Support from Literacy Experts
Tutors begin their AmeriCorps service with rigorous training from literacy experts, who give them the knowledge and tools they need to be effective and confident. We make sure Reading Corps tutors are successful by providing expert guidance so they're never on their own.

Tutors
Tutors work with students every day. They also receive training and coaching all year long so they can work effectively with struggling learners.

Internal Coaches
An onsite coach — usually a literacy specialist or teacher at the school — provides daily support to

	tutors and conducts regular checks to make sure the tutoring is on track. **Master Coaches** A literacy expert provided by Reading Corps visits each site several times throughout the year to help tutors and internal coaches use student data to make decisions about the right interventions.