Grantmaking Strategies
Request for Proposals
Economic Security Strategy:
Combining Financial Education and Asset Building
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Introduction
During the past 18 months, Silicon Valley Community Foundation has gone through a comprehensive process to identify a new set of grantmaking strategies that will respond to some of the most pressing challenges facing our two-county region of San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. This process involved identifying the key issues facing the region, conducting research, discovering best practices and seeking community input through a series of conversations and an online survey.

After extensive discussions by the community foundation’s board of directors, five grantmaking strategies were selected: Economic Security; Immigrant Integration; Education (Closing the Middle School Achievement Gap); Regional Planning (Land Use and Transportation Planning) and a Community Opportunity Fund focused on safety-net issues and innovative ideas. Research papers on each of the first four targeted issues are located on our website at www.siliconvalleycf.org.

We are enthusiastic about these strategies and believe that by working together with others who share these interests, we can have a transformative effect on our region. We value your work and look forward to collaborative efforts to make this a better place for all the people that work and live in our region.

A series of Requests for Proposals, or RFPs, that address particular strategies will be available beginning in fall 2008 through 2009.

RFP Eligibility Criteria
• San Mateo and/or Santa Clara County-serving organizations. Organizations headquartered outside the two-county region must demonstrate significant service to the area.
• Organizations with a 501(c)(3) designation or those that have a fiscal sponsor with a 501(c)(3) designation, public institutions or other entities that have a designated charitable purpose.
• Organizations that do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, citizenship status, creed, religion, religious affiliation, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, veteran status or any other protected status under applicable law. If an organization only serves a specific population, e.g., women, the community foundation will consider the proposal on a case-by-case basis.
• Organizations with religious affiliations will be considered for funding only if the project for which they seek support attempts to address the needs of the wider community without regard to religious beliefs.

Project Proposal Characteristics
We are receptive to project proposals that:
• Are collaborative in nature and bring public and private partners together with nonprofit organizations.
• Propose changes in how program services are delivered.
• Include both well-tested models that can be scaled up or expanded regionally while maintaining local relevance, and new pilots that if successful can be grown and replicated.
• Are concrete, practical and impactful.

What are not likely to be competitive are proposals that fail to demonstrate:
• Knowledge of the sector and its trends.
• Clarity of project rationale and approach.
• Clarity in identifying target population to be reached and justification for that focus.
• Benchmarks for measuring progress.
Silicon Valley Community Foundation is pleased to announce an RFP targeting programs that include both financial education and asset-building components. By using an RFP approach, the community foundation aims to solicit the best thinking of nonprofit service providers, public sector agencies, research institutions and other entities serving San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. We encourage you to read the community foundation’s research paper on economic security available on our website to better understand our goals and objectives in this area. Responses to this RFP are due on Nov. 20, 2008.

Background
Silicon Valley has not been immune from the home mortgage debacle and economic downturn that have affected the nation since late 2007. As the housing crisis and general economic conditions in our region worsened during 2008, the community foundation determined that support for financial education and asset-building activities would fill a critical need and constitute an effective intervention by the community foundation. Asset building requires financial education, the availability of affordable financial products and services, protective public policies and public awareness of the availability and value of these products and services. All of these elements are key, particularly for low-income families who are cash-strapped and have little cushion for emergencies such as a health crisis or job loss. Together, asset-building assistance and financial education enable families to have more options in life and to pass on opportunities to future generations.

Problem Statement
During the past decade, the increasingly complex financial landscape (e.g., “exotic” home mortgage loans and proliferating credit card offerings and savings products) has often led to consumer confusion and poor financial decision-making. At the same time, reduced regulatory safeguards have allowed increased predatory lending practices by some members of the financial services industry. Together, they have created serious financial trouble for many consumers as evidenced by the bursting of the housing bubble, which has contributed to tighter credit, job layoffs and general economic anxiety. This is even more worrisome in the context of this nation’s already low personal savings and high consumer debt indices.

In our two-county region, there are wide disparities between those who enjoy financial well-being and those who do not. Most critically, from an asset perspective, one in five San Mateo and Santa Clara County residents are asset poor (i.e., they do not have enough cash reserves or equity in their home or business to meet basic needs for three months during a period of joblessness, health emergency, divorce or other unexpected financial hardship). Low-skilled communities of color, particularly first- and second-generation immigrants, are likely to be disproportionately represented in this category. We believe that combining financial education that is linked with asset-building programs will lead to behavior change that can help mitigate the effects of the economic downturn and lay a strong foundation for economic resilience.

Eligible Projects
This RFP focuses on Financial Education and Asset Building. While we expect that most of the proposals funded will focus on program implementation, we also welcome requests for planning grants as stand-alone endeavors where a compelling case can be made for them. Note that successful planning grant recipients are not guaranteed to receive an additional grant for project or program implementation, but such support may be awarded.

Background of Financial Education and Asset-Building Strategy
Helping individuals and families achieve and maintain greater economic security requires increasing access to high-quality financial education, affordable financial services and tangible incentives for saving and building wealth. We believe that financial education is most effective if it is paired with asset-building support that provides concrete benefits so that people are incentivized to adopt new behaviors and can begin to move along a path toward greater economic security. To address these needs, the community foundation will support effective existing financial education and asset-building programs that demonstrate
this combined approach and can be expanded to impact larger numbers of individuals/families within our region. Existing programs should demonstrate an effective financial education/counseling/coaching and asset-building strategy as well as a successful track record in reaching significant numbers of underserved people. By underserved, we mean populations that face socio-economic, cultural and/or other barriers that leave them outside the financial mainstream.

The community foundation will also support innovative pilot interventions that can be scaled for more significant impact. Pilot interventions should demonstrate the potential for breaking new ground in the financial education and asset development area. For those products and services to be successful, we know they must offer participants convenience, a level of comfort with the language and cultural framework and an opportunity to set goals (e.g., purpose and amount of money to be saved, amount of credit card debt reduction). Pilot interventions that contribute new knowledge to the financial education and asset-building field more generally will also be considered. Planning grants may be awarded for curriculum development or other preparatory work to inform pilot financial education and asset-building interventions.

Grants for both existing and pilot programs will be considered for support of services targeted to a specific adult or youth audience that is particularly underserved and/or where innovative practices offer the most potential for community impact and best practice learning. Adult audiences might include Earned Income Tax Credit filers, the “unbanked,” Individual Development Account savers and those with damaged credit. Youth audiences might include students and other young people that receive in- or out-of-school financial education programs via classroom instruction, credit union initiatives and/or math-based youth development programs that provide financial education with “real world” relevance.

Successful applicants could include nonprofit organizations, financial institutions, public sector entities, educational institutions and private sector groups.

**Narrative Proposal Criteria: Implementation Grants**

Narrative proposals for implementation grants should be a maximum of eight typed pages, 12 point font and no less than one inch margins. Implementation grant proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria.

- Clarity of project description and project activities regarding steps to be taken to achieve desired outcomes.
- Ambitious yet achievable timeline that corresponds to the key activities.
- Number of people from targeted communities that benefit from activities is significant.
- Identified benchmarks and indicators of success that are meaningful and can be captured using qualitative and/or quantitative evaluation approaches.
- Project activities that make a significant contribution to content area knowledge and practice.
- Innovative and effective strategy with potential for systems change.
- Organizational capacity to implement project – including staffing and leadership, operational and fiscal management.
- Established track record in specific program content area or potential to achieve needed content expertise quickly and effectively/make use of prior experience to address problem statement/make a significant contribution to the content area.
- Ability to leverage financial, human, and technical resources leading to field building/expansion/greater impact than from sole project.

**Review and Selection Process**

- An advisory committee with issue expertise will help review all proposals recommended for funding to the community foundation’s board of directors.
- Applicants may receive a site visit, telephone call and/or other type of communication from community foundation staff as part of the proposal review process.
- Successful applicants will be informed of selection early in the first quarter of 2009.
Key dates:

September-October 2008: Information sessions (Please visit our website or review Key Dates document for times, dates and locations.)


- Please note that project proposals may be posted publicly on our website to reflect our interest in transparency and encourage learning among grantees and future applicants as well as members of the community at large.

Evaluation and Monitoring and Grantee Learning Activities
- Grantees will be expected to meet the community foundation’s requirements for the submission of financial and narrative reports, including an interim progress report and/or presentation to community foundation staff and final report.
- In an effort to further the overall program goals of this RFP, inform future RFPs related to this topic and contribute to larger field-building objectives, grantees will be asked to participate in periodic meetings to share information on project activities and best practices, as well as participate in research-based evaluations.

Total Awards
Up to 15 grants will be awarded under this RFP. Each successful applicant will receive grants in the range of $50,000-$250,000 for a minimum of one year; multi-year grants may be awarded in certain cases at the discretion of the community foundation.

Application Process
   - Key Dates schedule
   - Grant Applicant FAQ sheet
   - Research papers relevant to the RFP topic
   - RFP

2) Participation in one information session is highly encouraged for those interested in responding to an RFP. These sessions will be held in various locations throughout the region. Please visit our website or see the Key Dates schedule for the best place and time for you to attend. Information on all RFPs will be covered in each information session.

To reserve your seat, please visit our website at www.siliconvalleycf.org and register online. For planning purposes, we ask that you complete your online registration no later than one week prior to the date of the specific RFP Information Session you would like to attend.

Only those organizations considering a response to an RFP should attend an information session. The sessions are not intended for those who are interested in a general discussion of the community foundation’s new funding strategies. We invite you to read the grantmaking research papers for more information about the specific strategies.
Follow-up phone consultations and in-person meetings will be available with community foundation staff as time permits.

3) Submission of proposal. Although we prefer proposals in electronic form, a hard copy will be accepted. All proposals must be received no later than Nov. 20, 2008.

**About Planning Grants**

Planning grants from Silicon Valley Community Foundation are intended to assist organizations to explore the feasibility of a new project that will respond to the community foundation’s RFP grantmaking strategies. Some examples may include: consideration of innovative new programs and service areas, collaborative undertakings and other promising opportunities that require additional exploration or research.

The community foundation will make a limited number of planning grants that correspond to the RFP strategies. For these types of grants, the community foundation is interested in projects that have potential for significant impact in the RFP priority areas and where planning activities are a necessary component for moving an issue forward. The community foundation will consider funding planning projects that:
- Are collaborative in nature and bring new public and private partners together to address the RFP strategies.
- Focus on planning that seeks to improve program service delivery.
- Will lead to projects that are concrete, practical and impactful.
- Propose to replicate a model that requires adaptation, but lacks the financial resources, skill sets or expertise to undertake a planning process without outside assistance.

The community foundation will not fund planning that is part of an organization’s or program’s ongoing activities. The community foundation recognizes that planning grant monies may be needed to retain outside professional assistance where multi-agency collaboration will be undertaken.

**Narrative Proposal Criteria: Planning Grants**

Narrative proposals for planning grants should be a maximum of eight typed pages, 12 point font and no less than one inch margins. Planning grant proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:
- A rationale for why a planning grant is needed as a first step to meeting the objectives of the RFP.
- The principal focus and objectives of the proposed planning grant.
- Responsible planning grant personnel.
- Estimated timetable.
- Other sources of support for the proposal, if applicable.

**Total Awards**

The community foundation will award a limited number of planning grants. Each successful applicant will receive a grant up to $50,000 for a minimum of one year.

**How to Apply for Implementation or Planning Grants**

Submissions should include the following:
- Completed RFP Proposal Cover Sheet and answers to listed questions.
- Proposal narrative and other information pertinent to evaluating the proposal. The typed narrative should not exceed eight pages for implementation grants or for planning grants.
- Proposal attachments. Please include the following as separate attachments to the proposal:
  - A detailed line-item budget for the project and a budget narrative.
  - A copy of your organization’s current overall operating budget.
- Completed Application Checklist showing all documents being sent electronically or postmarked on Nov. 20 2008.

Thank you very much for your interest in responding to this RFP and in making our region a better place. We look forward to reviewing your proposal.
APPLICATION COVER SHEET
ECONOMIC SECURITY STRATEGY:
COMBINING FINANCIAL EDUCATION AND ASSET BUILDING

SUBMIT ONLINE AT:
www.siliconvalleycf.org/grantmaking-strategies
OR
SUBMIT ONE HARD COPY TO:
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
2440 West El Camino Real #300
Mountain View, CA 94040
Telephone: 650.450.5400    Fax: 650.450.5453

*We prefer electronic submissions. If you have questions, please contact us at grants@siliconvalleycf.org

1. Organizational Information
   • Date: _____________________________
   • Amount Requested: $____________________ Duration of project: _____________________________
   • Name of Institution/Organization: _________________________________________________________
   • Address: ____________________________________________________________________________
   • City/State/Zip: _________________________________________________________________________
   • Name and title of primary contact for proposal: ____________________________________________
     • Phone: __________________________ Fax: __________________________ Email address: ____________________________
   • Executive Director of organization (if other than above):
     • Phone: __________________________ Fax: __________________________ Email address: ____________________________

2. Geographic region served by the proposed project:

3. Mission of the organization:

4. Purpose of project:
5. Project objectives:

6. What is the demographic population that will be served by your project?

7. Significance of project: What impact do you hope to achieve? How will you know if you achieve it? (Please be specific.)

8. How does your organization determine if your existing financial education and asset-building program is effective? If you plan to expand it, what is your plan for making it scalable?

9. If your organization is proposing to pilot a new product or service, what evidence do you have that there is a need for it in this region?

10. Why is this the right time for this project?

11. What experience does your organization have working in this area?

12. What is the most difficult aspect of this proposal that may affect your success?

13. Collaborative Partners/Agencies (if any):
APPLICATION CHECKLIST FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND PLANNING GRANTS

☐ Cover Sheet and Questions

☐ RFP Proposal Narrative to augment the Cover Sheet questions and describe your organization’s proposed project activities more fully
  - A maximum 8 pages, 12 point font, margins no less than 1” for implementation grants.
  - A maximum 8 pages, 12 point font, margins no less than 1” for planning grants.

Attachments: All attachments are required.

☐ Attachment A: A detailed line-item budget for the project

☐ Attachment B: A budget narrative for the project

☐ Attachment C: A copy of your organization’s current overall operating budget

☐ Attachment D: Most recent audit, if available

☐ Attachment E: Memoranda of Understanding from collaborative partners (if appropriate)

☐ Submit online at: http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/grantmaking-strategies
  OR one hard copy mailed to Silicon Valley Community Foundation’s headquarters
  2440 West El Camino Real, Suite 300
  Mountain View, California 94040

Submissions must be sent or postmarked no later than Nov. 20, 2008.

Thank you for your application.

If you have any questions, please call 650.450.5400 or email us at grants@siliconvalleycf.org
ABOUT SILICON VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The vision of Silicon Valley Community Foundation is to be a comprehensive center for philanthropy that inspires greater civic participation throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

The mission of Silicon Valley Community Foundation is to strengthen the common good, improve quality of life and address the most challenging problems. We do this through visionary community leadership, world-class donor services and effective grantmaking.

We value:

- Collaboration
- Diversity
- Inclusiveness
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Public Accountability
- Respect
- Responsiveness

At a Glance
Silicon Valley Community Foundation is a catalyst and leader for innovative solutions to our region’s most challenging problems. Serving all of San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, the community foundation has more than $1.9 billion in assets under management and 1,500 philanthropic funds. The community foundation provides grants through donor advised and corporate funds in addition to its own Community Endowment Fund. In addition, the community foundation serves as a regional center for philanthropy, providing donors simple and effective ways to give locally and around the world. Silicon Valley Community Foundation launched in January 2007 following the landmark merger of Community Foundation Silicon Valley and Peninsula Community Foundation and is now one of the largest community foundations in the nation.

Find out more at www.siliconvalleycf.org.

MORE INFORMATION

For a schedule of information sessions, supporting research papers, issue briefs and other information, go to www.siliconvalleycf.org

Requests for proposals will be issued beginning in September 2008 and continuing through 2009.