Grantmaking Strategies
Request for Proposals
Education:
Closing the Middle School Achievement Gap in Mathematics through an Out-of-School Strategy
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Introduction

Beginning in spring 2007 and for eighteen 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; Regional Planning and a Community Opportunity Fund focused on safety-net issues and innovative ideas. On Sept. 10, 2008, the community foundation published research papers on each of the first four targeted issues and the first five Requests for Proposals, or RFPs, that address the strategies (located on our website at www.siliconvalleycf.org). The community foundation will continue to publish RFPs that address the defined strategies according to the Key Dates Calendar available on our website. This RFP addresses the Education: Closing the Middle School Achievement Gap in Mathematics through an Out-of-School Strategy.

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.

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 (such as after-school and/or summer youth development programs that also provide academic support in math) 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.
- 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 that targets closing the middle school achievement gap in mathematics through Out-of-School Strategies. By using an RFP approach,
the community foundation aims to solicit the best thinking of nonprofit service providers, public sector agencies, professional and research institutions and other entities serving San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. We encourage you to read the community foundation’s research paper on education to better understand our goals and objectives in this area (http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/grantmaking-strategies/pdf/research-paper-closing-the-gap.pdf). Responses to this RFP are due on Jan. 23, 2009.

Background
Silicon Valley is a global hub of technological innovation and discovery. However, a majority of students, especially those who are English Learners, or ELs, students of color and low-income students, will not be adequately prepared to contribute to our region’s work force. In general, these students repeatedly score below proficient on standardized tests in reading and mathematics. This gap is pronounced in the lower grades and only widens in the upper grades. Achievement in these subjects is fundamental as it is a predictor of later success, including students’ pursuit and completion of post-secondary education and higher earnings.

The gap in academic achievement separating ELs, students of color and low-income students from other students is widely recognized as one of the most significant challenges facing our schools today. The community foundation recognizes that the need for investing in strategies to close the achievement gap, particularly during the middle-school years, must be addressed. Grantees of this RFP will provide support to lower-performing students by investing in high-quality, extended learning programs during the school year and summer.

Problem Statement
Competence in mathematics is essential for functioning in everyday life as well as for success in our increasingly knowledge-based economy. Success in Algebra I, in particular, is commonly recognized as a gatekeeper to the college-preparatory track. Students who take Algebra I by eighth or ninth grade are far more likely to take calculus in high school and pursue higher education than those who do not. Despite the many signs that point to the importance of algebra, an alarming number of students in the region are not taught or prepared to study; nor do they successfully complete this course. This is even more significant for ELs, low-income students and students of color.

Gaps in student achievement have critical, underlying levers including: significant disparities in the quality of mathematics coursework leading up to algebra in the sixth or seventh grades, rigor and relevance of curriculum, level of expectations, and the availability of remedial and advanced programs. A positive student environment has also shown to be pivotal to increase student achievement. Closing the achievement gap in middle school mathematics is unlikely to happen without intentional, focused programs that invest in these key levers.

Eligible Projects
This RFP focuses on Out-of-School Strategies. 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. A planning grant may include a model program through which an organization wants to document a successful out-of-school program and support convening efforts to facilitate replication.

Background of Out-of-School Strategies
Teaching and learning in school classrooms are necessary, but not sufficient to close the achievement gap in mathematics among ELs, low-income students and students of color. Young people need multiple opportunities to learn and grow – at home, in school and in the community.
It is critical to support lower-performing students by investing in programs before and after school, on the weekends, during school holidays and in the summer. The community foundation’s funding will target programs that offer academic support in mathematics so students can successfully complete Algebra I in middle school. These extended learning opportunities can be either:

- Before-school or after-school programs that coincide with the school year and intentionally infuse mathematics instruction.
- Summer school programs that provide intensive mathematics instruction coupled with additional enrichment opportunities.

The community foundation specifically seeks to fund schools, youth development programs or school support organizations’ out-of-school programs that:

- Offer quality mathematics-specific instruction from staff with mathematics expertise, and curriculum delivery that improves students’ problem-solving skills and requires a higher order of questioning, analyzing and reasoning.
- Build strong partnerships with parents, schools, school district administrators and other education stakeholders to ensure impact, relevance and sustainability.
- Create a positive learning environment with high expectations for all students. Additional emphasis is placed on engaging parents in meaningful ways regarding students’ progression.

The community foundation encourages organizations to:

- Assess students effectively so staff knows where students begin the program in terms of achievement and then use data to monitor progress, and design and provide individualized instruction that recognizes the diverse levels of proficiency, learning styles and interests of students.
- Continuously strengthen the program by documenting and incorporating best practices and feedback.
- Provide innovative uses of instructional technology.

The intent of the community foundation’s Out-of-School Strategy is not only to improve mathematics proficiency in middle school students in the short term, but also through shared findings, to produce systemic improvement in mathematics instruction in before-school, after-school and summer programs.

**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 on a competitive basis 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.
- Ability to build a learning/replication model for other like-organizations.

**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 in March 2009.**
Important Dates:

Nov. 20, 2008: Release of RFP on Education: Closing the Middle School Achievement Gap in Mathematics through Out-of-School Strategies

Dec. 1 & 4, 2008: Information sessions (Please visit our website to register.)

Jan. 23, 2009: Proposal deadline for Out-of-School Strategies

March 2009: Announcement of grant awards for Out-of-School Strategies

- Please note that project proposals may be posted publicly on our website to reflect our value of 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

We expect to award approximately 15 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

1) Review of reference materials:
   - 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.

   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 by email or postmarked no later than Jan. 23, 2009.
**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 Jan. 23, 2009.

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 CHECKLIST FOR EDUCATION:
CLOSING THE MIDDLE SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN MATHEMATICS: OUT-OF-SCHOOL STRATEGY

☐ 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: Board of Directors

☐ Attachment F: Evidence of tax-exempt status

☐ Attachment G: 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 received by email or postmarked no later than Jan. 23, 2009.

Thank you for your application.

If you have any questions, please call 650.450.5400 or email us at grants@siliconvalleycf.org
APPLICATION COVER SHEET
EDUCATION:
CLOSING THE MIDDLE SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN MATHEMATICS: OUT-OF-SCHOOL STRATEGY

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. What is the demographic population that will be served by your project?
5. What impact do you hope to achieve? How will you know if you achieve it? (Please be specific.)

6. How will the proposed project help your organization to achieve this impact?

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

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

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

10. Collaborative Partners/Agencies\(^1\) (if any):

\(^1\)Any public or private partners that are anticipated to come together to address the issue/project.
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.

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