



request for proposals

Increasing Access to
Public Transit

Increasing Access to Public Transit

Introduction

Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF) addresses our community's most challenging problems. Despite the area's great wealth, residents are challenged by so much – lack of affordable housing, financial instability, the precarious safety and insecurity of immigrants and persistent gaps in student achievement. Through its discretionary grantmaking, the community foundation addresses these issues among others, including support for people to engage in civic affairs and the public decisions that directly affect their lives.

SVCF recognizes that to achieve meaningful progress on these issues, collaboration is critical. By issuing requests for proposals (RFP), we hope to solicit the best ideas from nonprofits, public agencies, research institutions and community organizations serving San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, and to partner together on solutions. The focus of this RFP is on increasing access to transit in our communities. We invite you to apply.

Grant Application Deadline

Grant applications must be submitted through our online application system, [Apply SVCF](#), by **11:59 p.m. PST on Friday, March 20, 2020.**

The Problem

Silicon Valley's housing crisis has pushed many low-income people to the outer reaches of the Bay Area in search of more affordable options. These residents must deal with higher transportation costs and longer commutes getting to and from work. While regional investments in BART and Caltrain enhance mass transit, these options tend to favor higher-income riders. Investment in bus transit has not kept pace, even though the lowest-income people in the region rely on it.

The public transit system is also fragmented with more than two dozen operators in the Bay Area alone. Those who are most reliant on bus transit—students, seniors, disabled and low-income people— experience uncoordinated schedules, inconsistent fares, inadequate information about transit options and even unsafe conditions. Those who can afford it are increasingly turning to cars, adding to congestion on roads and reducing transit ridership. Serious social, economic and environmental consequences for the region will occur unless we can create more alternatives to driving that work for everyone.

Key Dates

February 24, 2020:
Application process opens

March 20, 2020,
11:59 p.m.:
Proposal submission
deadline

May 2020:
Announcement of grant
awards

The Opportunity

There are some bright spots, despite these transportation challenges. In 2018, San Mateo County voters passed Measure W, resulting in \$2.4 billion in new investments to relieve traffic congestion and improve transportation options for historically underserved residents. Future planning efforts, and regional measures, such as the regional transportation ballot initiative in 2020, could create significant new funding and opportunities to meet the needs of the region's most underserved communities.

In addition to funding, technology-enabled services, such as demand-responsive transit (a form of transit where vehicles alter their routes based on transport demand rather than using fixed routes or schedules) have the potential to provide more accessible and cost-effective transit options to more people.

Program Goal

SVCF believes improving public transit and having alternatives to driving are critical for our quality of life, our economy and our environment. Our goal is to invest in strategies that will lead to more affordable and accessible public transit options for everyone, including low-income residents and workers, youth, seniors and those with disabilities. SVCF has chosen to focus this grant opportunity on the following:

- 1) Increasing local bus, walking and biking options and optimizing the use of our existing highway infrastructure that provide viable alternatives to driving alone.
- 2) Creating a more seamless public transit experience through more coordinated transit maps, schedules and fares as well as technology-enabled services that improve last mile connections and provide transport options on demand.

Consideration will also be given to proposed projects that support the engagement of marginalized and vulnerable groups in the strategies described above.

Note that SVCF will accept proposals for specific projects or for general operating support. Proposals for general operating grants will be considered provided the overall organization mission meets the goals of the grant strategy. General operating grants are unrestricted funds that enable an organization to carry out its mission. These grants are intended to support an organization's administrative and infrastructure costs, assist with strategic financial and organizational capacity and/or help maintain core programs and essential staff.

Application Process

1) Review reference materials. including **SVCF's research brief** on Increasing Access to Affordable Housing and Public Transit Opportunities. Reference materials may be found at siliconvalleycf.org/grants.

2) Participate in an information session.

This is highly encouraged for those responding to this RFP. Because all grant applications are submitted online, this session provides an overview of SVCF's online application system, **Apply SVCF**.

Additionally, the information sessions will provide an opportunity for applicants to review the RFP in greater depth and ask questions. [Click here](#) to register for an information session.

3) Submit grant application, including required attachments, through our new online application system, **Apply SVCF, beginning February 24, 2020. Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. (PST) Friday, March 20, 2020.** A guide to the online application can be found [here](#).

Applicants should include a budget narrative that clearly outlines the necessity of the project's specific line items. More specific questions about project eligibility, proposal process and evaluation can be addressed through phone calls and in-person meetings with the program officer, as time permits.

Proposal Eligibility Criteria

- Organizations serving San Mateo and/or Santa Clara counties. Organizations headquartered outside the two-county region may apply but should demonstrate significant service to these areas or partner with a local organization that can.
- Organizations with a 501(c)(3) designation, those that have a fiscal sponsor with a 501(c)(3) designation, public agencies, collaborations of nonprofit and public agencies, or other entities that have a designated charitable purpose.
- Organizations must not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, citizenship status, creed, religion, religious affiliation, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, veteran status or any other protected status.
- Organizations with religious affiliations will be considered for funding only if the project for which they seek support addresses the needs of the wider community without regard to religious beliefs.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

SVCF awards grants on a competitive basis. Successful proposals will need to meet the minimum eligibility criteria and provide a clear and compelling narrative about how the proposed project will advance SVCF's program goals. Proposals will also be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Clarity of project description and strategies/activities to be implemented to reach desired outcomes
- Relevant and measurable outcomes and indicators of success
- Strategies that are based on well-tested models and can be scaled or expanded regionally, while maintaining local relevance
- Achievable timeline (12 months) that corresponds to the key activities
- Organizational capacity to implement project, including staffing, leadership, operational and fiscal management
- Established track record of work related to proposed project or likelihood of success with a new project
- Ability to leverage financial, human and technical resources from other partners leading to greater impact
- Ability to contribute successes and lessons learned with the field

Awards

Please note that project proposal narratives may be posted publicly on our website to reflect our value of transparency and encourage learning among grantees, future applicants and the community at large.

Review and Selection Process

An advisory committee with issue expertise will help staff review all proposals recommended for funding to SVCF's Board of Directors. Applicants may receive a site visit, telephone call and/or other type of communication from SVCF staff as part of the review process.

Applicants will be informed of grant decisions in May 2020.

Evaluation, Monitoring and Grantee Learning Activities

Grantees will be expected to meet SVCF's reporting and evaluation requirements and be willing and available to talk with SVCF staff and donor advisors if requested. Grantees will also be asked to participate in periodic meetings to share information on project successes, challenges and lessons learned to further the overall program goals of this RFP.

Thank you very much for your interest in responding to this RFP and in joining us to address our region's housing crisis. We look forward to reviewing your proposal.



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About Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Silicon Valley Community Foundation advances innovative philanthropic solutions to challenging problems. We engage donors and corporations from Silicon Valley, across the country and around the globe to make our region and world better for all. Our passion for helping people and organizations achieve their philanthropic dreams has created a global philanthropic enterprise committed to the belief that possibilities start here. Learn more at siliconvalleycf.org.

More Information

If you have questions, please contact us at grants@siliconvalleycf.org or call 650.930.9885.

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Proposals accepted February 24, 2020. Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. (PST) Friday, March 20, 2020.