



request for proposals

Education: Closing the Middle School
Achievement Gap in Mathematics
through an Out-of-School Strategy



Education: Closing the Middle School Achievement Gap in Mathematics through an Out-of-School Strategy

Introduction

Silicon Valley Community Foundation advances innovative philanthropic solutions to challenging problems. One of these challenging problems – the achievement gap in middle school mathematics that divides English learners, students of color and low-income students from their peers – is addressed through our education strategy. To better understand our goals and objectives for this strategy, we encourage you to read the SVCF's research paper on the topic at siliconvalleycf.org/education.

The education strategy has a two-pronged approach:

- 1) an in-school strategy, which seeks to increase the effectiveness of instruction during school hours; and
- 2) out-of-school strategy, which seeks to increase the number and effectiveness of extended learning opportunities for students.

This request for proposals, or RFP, focuses specifically on the out-of-school strategy. By using an RFP approach, SVCF 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.

Grant Application Deadline

The application process will open on Aug. 22, 2016. Grant applications must be submitted through our online application system, [applySVCF](#), by 5 p.m. on Sept. 23, 2016.

Problem Statement

Competence in mathematics is essential for functioning in everyday life, as well as for success in our increasingly knowledge-based economy. Students who are not proficient in mathematics coursework in middle school are far less likely to take four courses of college-track mathematics in high school and pursue higher education. Despite the many signs that point to the importance of middle school mathematics, an alarming number of students in the region do not achieve proficiency. The numbers are particularly high for English learners, students of color and low-income students.

It is critical to invest in programs that provide extended learning opportunities to high-need English learners, students of color and low-income students during the school year and summer.

Disparities in the quality of education contribute significantly to gaps in student achievement. English learners, students of color and low-income students disproportionately attend schools that receive fewer high-quality education resources and have limited learning opportunities outside of the school environment. Gaps in student achievement have critical, underlying levers including quality of instruction in the middle school grades, rigor and relevance of curriculum, the level of teachers' expectations and the availability of remedial programs. Closing the achievement gap in middle school mathematics is unlikely without intentional, focused programs that invest in these key areas.

Program Goal

It is critical to invest in programs that provide extended learning opportunities to high-need English learners, students of color and low-income students during the school year and summer. SVCF funding will target programs that provide high-quality extended learning opportunities that rigorously prepare students to be successful in middle school mathematics coursework.

SVCF will fund out-of-school projects that:

- Offer rigorous mathematics instruction that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and the Mathematical Practices.
- Deliver relevant and engaging curriculum that is aligned with Common Core State Standards in Mathematics.
- Partner with school district administrators to ensure alignment with district learning goals and relevance of programming.
- Create a positive learning environment with high expectations for all students. Additional emphasis is placed on engaging parents in meaningful ways regarding students' learning.

- Assess students effectively so staff knows students' achievement levels as they begin the program. Staff should use data to monitor progress, and design and provide individualized instruction that recognizes the diverse levels of proficiency, learning styles and interests of students.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of how the proposed project advances existing goals, and have a clear strategy for scaling the program.
- Have a clear plan to measure project success and use a well-tested program quality improvement tool and process.

SVCF will gauge success according to these indicators: increases in student mathematics proficiencies in middle school, and enrollment in college-track mathematics high school coursework.

Proposal 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, 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 that do 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 under applicable law. If an organization only serves a specific population, e.g., women or specific ethnic populations, SVCF 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 concrete, practical and impactful project proposals that:

- Take a system-wide approach, ensuring that the project's outcomes will be relevant to school learning and student placement.
- 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.
- Benefit from collaborative work and bring public and private partners together with nonprofit organizations.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the sector and its trends.
- Identify the target population and provide justification for that focus.
- Provide clear benchmarks for measuring progress.

We expect most of the proposals funded will focus on program implementation, but we may also consider requests for planning grants as stand-alone endeavors, if applicants make a compelling case for such grants. For these types of grants, SVCF is interested in programs that have potential for significant impact in the RFP

Key Dates

August 22, 2016

Application process opens

August 26, 2015

RFP information session
(register through our
online calendar)

September 23, 2016 - 5 p.m.

Proposal submission
deadline

December 2016

Announcement of grant
awards

priority area, and in which planning activities are necessary to move an issue forward. Some examples may include collaborative undertakings, consideration of innovative new programs and service areas, and other promising opportunities that require additional exploration or research. SVCF will not fund planning that is part of an organization's or a program's ongoing activities. Note that successful planning grant recipients are not guaranteed to receive additional grants for project or program implementation.

Application Process

- 1) **Review reference materials.** These may be found at siliconvalleyvcf.org/education.
 - Research paper on the Education strategy
 - This RFP - Education: Closing the Middle School Achievement Gap in Mathematics through an Out-of-School Strategy
- 2) **Participate in the information session on Aug. 25, 2016.** This is highly encouraged for those interested in responding to this RFP. Information sessions provide an opportunity for applicants to review in more depth the RFP's content and ask questions. To register for this session, please visit our website's calendar. More specific questions about program concepts, content, eligibility and evaluation can be addressed through phone calls and in-person meetings with the SVCF program officer, as time permits.
- 3) **Submit grant application,** including required attachments, through applySVCF beginning Aug. 22, 2016. Applications must be submitted by **5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 23, 2016.**

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals that build on a strong, consistent history of demonstrated, positive impact on student learning and/or feature unique partnerships are encouraged to apply. Proposals for grants should include a narrative that responds to the questions found on applySVCF. Grant proposals will be evaluated, on a competitive basis, using the following criteria:

- Innovative and effective strategy with potential for systems change.
- Clarity of project description and project activities regarding steps to be taken to achieve desired outcomes.
- Achievable timeline that corresponds to the key activities.
- Meaningful benchmarks and indicators of success.
- Organizational capacity to implement project – including staffing and leadership, and operational and fiscal management.
- Established track record in specific program content area or potential to achieve needed content expertise.
- Ability to leverage financial, human and technical resources leading to greater impact.
- Ability to contribute content area knowledge to the field.

Total Awards

Successful applicants are expected to receive grants up to \$100,000 for a maximum one-year period. Budget requests will be closely analyzed, and applicants should include a budget narrative that makes clear the necessity of the project's specific line-items.

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 for this strategy will help staff to 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 proposal review process.

Applicants will be informed of grant decisions in December 2016.

Evaluation, Monitoring and Grantee Learning Activities

- Grantees will be expected to meet SVCF's requirements for a final financial and narrative report, as well as a presentation to SVCF staff and donors if requested.
- 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 evaluations.

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.



siliconvalleycf.org



facebook.com/siliconvalleycf



twitter.com/siliconvalleycf



youtube.com/TheSVCF

2440 W. El Camino Real, Suite 300 • Mountain View, CA 94040
T: 650.450.5400

About Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Silicon Valley Community Foundation advances innovative philanthropic solutions to challenging problems. As the largest community foundation in the world, 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 650.429.3052

To get all the latest grantmaking information, follow us on Facebook and subscribe to our community e-newsletter at siliconvalleycf.org/publications.

*RFP published August 2016
Proposals accepted Aug. 22, 2016, through Sept. 23, 2016.*