



■ Request for Proposals

Economic Security Strategy:
Combining Financial Education
and Asset Building



Introduction

Silicon Valley Community Foundation is a catalyst and leader for innovative solutions to our region's most challenging problems. One of these problems—the need for economically-vulnerable residents to have more financial knowledge and opportunities to build assets—is addressed through our economic security grantmaking strategy.

To better understand our goals and objectives for this strategy, we encourage you to read the community foundation's research paper on the topic at <http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/grantmaking-strategies/pdf/research-paper-asset-building.pdf>

This request for proposals, or RFP, focuses specifically on financial education and asset building. 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.

Responses to this RFP are due 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 28, 2010. In order to be fair to all applicants, there will be no exceptions to the deadline for late proposals.

Problem Statement

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, equity in their home or business to meet basic needs for three months to weather an unexpected financial hardship). Low-skilled communities of color, particularly first- and second-generation immigrants are likely to be disproportionately represented in this category. The economic downturn that began in 2008 and continues in 2010 has likely exacerbated the problem in these communities and affected others who previously enjoyed greater economic security. We believe that combining financial education with asset-building programs will help mitigate the effects of the recession and lay a strong foundation for economic resilience. However, while the infrastructure for delivering asset-building services and promoting asset building as a key anti-poverty strategy is well-developed in certain parts of the region, it is less so in other geographic areas.

Program Goal

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 repairing credit, 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. These 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.

Grants will be considered for support of services targeted to specific populations who are particularly underserved and where practices offer the most potential for community impact. Programs might focus on such activities as Earned Income Tax Credit preparation, matched savings, financial coaching, access to financial services and credit building. Successful applicants could include nonprofit organizations, financial institutions, public sector entities, educational institutions and private sector groups.

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, 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 concrete, practical and impactful project proposals that:

- 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 target population to be reached and justification for that focus.
- Provide clear benchmarks for measuring progress.

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 may consider requests for planning grants as stand-alone endeavors where a compelling case can be made for them. For these types of grants, the community foundation is interested in projects that have potential for significant impact in the RFP priority area and where planning activities are a necessary component for moving 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. The community foundation will not fund planning that is part of an organization's or program's ongoing activities. 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.

Application Process

1) Review of reference materials.

- Key Dates (listed below and at <http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/grantmaking-strategies/key-dates.html>)
- Grant Applicant FAQ sheet (<http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/grantmaking-strategies/grant-FAQ.html>)
- Research paper (<http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/grantmaking-strategies/pdf/research-paper-asset-building.pdf>)
- RFP for Economic Security: Combining Financial Education and Asset Building

2) Participation in the information session is highly encouraged for those interested in responding to this 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 three days prior to the date of the RFP information session.

Only those organizations considering a response to the RFP should attend the information session.

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, hard copies will be accepted.

All proposals must be received by email or postmarked no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 28, 2010. In order to be fair to all applicants, there will be no exceptions to the deadline for late proposals.

Key Dates

April 2, 2010: Information session (Please visit our website to register)

April 28, 2010, 5 p.m.: Proposal submission deadline

July 2010: Announcement of grant awards

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals for grants should include a narrative that responds to the questions posed at the end of this document.

The narrative should be a maximum of eight typed pages, use 12-point font and no less than one-inch margins.

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.
- Achievable timeline that corresponds to the key activities.
- Meaningful benchmarks and indicators of success.
- 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 secure 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

Approximately \$1 million is available for grants under this RFP. Please think carefully about all the aspects of the proposed project that require support, prioritize what you need and budget for those items. 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. Typically planning grant requests should not exceed \$50,000.

Review and Selection Process

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 July 2010.

Please note that successful project proposal narratives 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, 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, final report, and/or presentation to community foundation staff and donors.
- 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.

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.

Grant Application Checklist

- Cover Sheet**
- RFP Proposal Narrative** addressing proposal information requirement questions.
 - A maximum 8 pages, 12-point font, margins no less than 1"

Attachments: All attachments are required.

- Attachment A:** A detailed line-item budget for the project (that includes details on how the community foundation's funding would be used)
- 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 list that includes members' professional affiliations
- Attachment F:** Evidence of tax-exempt status
- Attachment G:** Memoranda of Understanding from collaborative partners (if appropriate)
- Send to grantproposals@siliconvalleycf.org OR mail one hardcopy to Silicon Valley Community Foundation's headquarters

Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Attn. Grantmaking Department
2440 West El Camino Real, Suite 300
Mountain View, CA 94040

Submissions must be received by email or postmarked no later than **5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 28, 2010**. In order to be fair to all applicants, no exceptions will be made for late proposals.

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

Economic Security: Combining Financial Education with Asset Building

Submit one electronic* copy to:

grantproposals@siliconvalleycf.org

or

Submit one hard copy to:

Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Attn: Grantmaking Department

2440 West El Camino Real, Suite 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*

General Information

Date: _____

Amount Requested: \$ _____ Duration of project: _____

Name of Institution/Organization: _____

Project Name: _____

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: _____

Please describe in one sentence the project and the purpose for which funding is being sought:

Proposal Information Requirements

1. What is the mission of the organization?
2. What is the project for which funding is being sought and what is the primary purpose of the project?
3. What is the geographic region(s) served by the proposed project (county and specific cities/communities)?
4. What is the demographic population that will be served by your project? (Please provide specifics, e.g. percentage of low-income or people of color, etc. as available.)
5. What are the key project activities and time line? If the project received funding from the Economic Security Fund: Combining Financial Education with Asset Building strategy previously, what aspects of the project have changed or not?
6. What impact do you hope to achieve? How will you know if you achieve it? (Please provide specific outcomes, identified benchmarks and indicators of success that are meaningful and can be captured using qualitative and quantitative evaluation approaches - e.g. provide tax preparation services to X# of individuals receiving Earned Income Tax Credits, representing a Y% increase of eligible filers in a certain geography, and assist Z# of individuals in matched savings program resulting in X% saved to address specific economic security need.)
7. What are the unique aspects and features of your project?
8. What experience does your organization or collaborative have working in this area? (Please provide specific achievements that describe your organization's capacity.)
9. Describe your organizational capacity to implement the project. (Please include staffing and board leadership as well as operational and fiscal health and management.) If you are involved in both an individual and collaborative project, address your capacity to participate in both.
10. What is the most difficult aspect of this project that could affect your success?
11. Why is this the right time for this project?
12. What can your organization/collaborative contribute to the field in terms of knowledge-building? Are there new, innovative approaches/tools that your agency has developed to respond to the economic crisis and its impact on your organization's clients? (e.g. formed new networks or created a new way of working with clients and service providers in the field, etc.)
13. If the proposal were to receive funding from the community foundation, is this a project or effort your organization would seek to sustain after the funding from the community foundation ends?
14. Collaborative Partners/Agencies (if any) and their contact information.



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 | Integrity |
| Diversity | Public Accountability |
| Inclusiveness | Respect |
| Innovation | 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 \$1.7 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 endowment funds. The community foundation serves as a regional center for philanthropy, providing donors simple and effective ways to give locally and around the world. Find out more at www.siliconvalleycf.org.

MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions, please contact us at grants@siliconvalleycf.org or call 650.450.5400.



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To read more about Silicon Valley Community Foundation
visit www.siliconvalleycf.org
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