SILICON VALLEY | community® foundation
SERVING SAN MATEO AND SANTA CLARA COUNTIES

Request for Proposals

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

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 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 community foundation's research paper on the topic at http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/grantmaking-strategies/pdf/research-paper-closing-the-gap.pdf.

The education strategy has a two-pronged approach supporting in-school strategies, which seek to increase the effectiveness of instruction during school hours and out-of-school strategies, which seek to increase the number and effectiveness of extended learning time opportunities. The anticipated outcome of this strategy is that more students will be prepared to take and successfully complete college-track high school mathematics courses after the intervention. This request for proposals, or RFP, 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 public school districts and other public agencies, nonprofit organizations, professional and research institutions and other entities serving San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Responses to this RFP are due 5 p.m. on Friday, September 23, 2011.
There will be no exceptions to the deadline for late proposals.

Problem Statement

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. Achievement in mathematics is fundamental, as it is a predictor of later success, including students' pursuit and completion of post-secondary education and higher earnings.

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 successfully complete 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 prepared to study, not taught effectively and do not successfully complete this course. The numbers are particularly high for ELs, low-income students and students of color.

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

Program Goal

It is critical to invest in programs that provide extended learning opportunities to lower-performing students during the school year and summer. Community foundation funding will target programs that provide high-quality extended learning opportunities that rigorously prepare students to take and successfully complete Algebra I during eighth or ninth grade.

The community foundation will fund out-of-school programs that:

- Offer quality mathematics-specific instruction from staff with mathematics expertise.

- Deliver curriculum that provides deeper learning opportunities, specifically, students' problem-solving skills and requires a higher order of questioning, analyzing and reasoning.

- Build strong partnerships with 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.

- Assess students effectively so staff knows where students begin the program in terms of achievement, use data to monitor progress, and design and provide individualized instruction that recognizes the diverse levels of proficiency, learning styles and interests of students.

- The intent of the community foundation's out-of-school education strategy is to improve mathematics proficiency in middle school students and, through sharing best practices and results, produce systemic improvement in mathematics instruction in extended learning programs.

- The community foundation will gauge success according to these indicators: enrollment in Algebra I in the eighth or ninth grade, successful completion of Algebra I in the eighth or ninth grade and increases in student mathematics proficiencies in pre-algebra or algebra courses.

Proposal Eligibility Criteria

- Organizations serving San Mateo and/or Santa Clara County. Organizations headquartered outside the two-county region must demonstrate significant service to the area.

- Organizations with a 501(c)(3) designation (such as youth development programs or school support organizations), those that have a fiscal sponsor with a 501(c)(3) designation, public institutions or other entities (such as schools or school districts) 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, 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.

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-closing-the-gap.pdf)
- RFP for Education: Closing the Middle School Achievement Gap in Mathematics through an Out-of-School Strategy

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 two days prior to the date of the information session. Only those organizations considering a response to a 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 Friday, September 23, 2011. There will be no exceptions to the deadline for late proposals.

Key Dates

Sept. 7, 2011:	Information session (please visit our website to register)
September 23, 2011, 5 p.m.:	Proposal submission deadline
December 2011:	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 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 will receive grants in the range of $50,000 to $100,000 for a minimum of one year. 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. Planning grant requests should not exceed $50,000.

Please note that 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.

Review and Selection Process

The advisory committee with issue expertise for this strategy will help staff to 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 December 2011.

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 when appropriate and/or presentation to community foundation staff and donors, and a 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.

Application Checklist

❑ **Cover Sheet**

❑ **RFP Proposal Narrative** that directly and succinctly addresses the proposal information requirement questions specified on the Cover Sheet

■ A maximum of eight pages, 12-point font, margins no less than 1 inch.

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 Friday, September 23, 2011. 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

Education: Closing the Middle School Achievement Gap Through an Out-Of-School Strategy

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: _____

Organizational Budget: $ _____ School District/County Served: _____

Project Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Website Address: _____

Name and title of primary contact for proposal: _____

_____
PHONE: FAX: EMAIL ADDRESS:

Executive Director of organization (if other than above): _____

_____
PHONE: FAX: EMAIL ADDRESS:

Are you a past grantee under this grantmaking strategy?   Yes ❏   No ❏

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?

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. number of students enrolled in programming, gains in students proficiencies as measured by pre and post-intervention assessments, standardized testing results and modification in course placement following the intervention.)*

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)*.

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. If your proposal receives funding from the community foundation, would it have the potential to become self-sustaining when the community foundation's support ends? If so, how?

13. What do you plan to contribute to the field in terms of knowledge-building?

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 $1.8 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.

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Mountain View, California 94040

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