



Request for Proposals

**Education: Closing the Middle School
Achievement Gap in Mathematics
through an In-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 (ELs), students of color and low-income students from their peers — is addressed through our education strategy. The goal of this strategy is that all students will be prepared to take and successfully complete college-track high school mathematics courses. To better understand our objectives for this strategy, we encourage you to read the community foundation's research paper on the topic at <http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/content/education>.

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. This request for proposals, targets closing the middle school achievement gap in mathematics through in-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.

Grant applications must be submitted through our new online application system, applySVCF , by 5:00 p.m. (PST) on December 7, 2012.

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, students of color and low-income students.

Disparities in the quality of education contribute to gaps in student achievement. Teachers are central to improving student outcomes, yet in schools with high percentages of ELs, students of color and low-income students, teachers tend to be less experienced, are more likely to lack full credentials and have less access to professional development and opportunities to learn from other teachers. Research also supports the importance of rigorous curricula and high expectations as a means to improving students' academic achievement. However, schools serving a high percentage of ELs, low-income students and students of color are less likely to offer rigorous, high-quality math curriculum and staff are more likely to have lower expectations around student performance.

Program Goal

It is critical to invest in programs that improve the way teachers teach and the way students learn mathematics. Community foundation funding will target building the capacity of public schools and supporting organizations that result in all students being prepared to take and successfully complete Algebra I during eighth or ninth grade. Through this strategy, grants will support teacher professional development, and specifically programs that improve:

- Content knowledge in Common Core State Standards for Mathematics
- Teaching practice and skills, so that classroom instruction improves students' problem-solving and thinking skills; specifically, helping students learn a higher order of questioning, analyzing and reasoning.

The community foundation funds organizations that:

- Create and support professional learning communities by allocating time so peer teacher learning becomes an established part of the school day and a regular part of school life.
- Use effective assessments to drive instruction.
- Design and provide individualized instruction that recognizes the diverse levels and learning styles and interests of students.
- Hold a culture of high academic achievement for all students.
- Are planning implementation of Common Core State Standards for Mathematical Practice.

The community foundation will gauge success according to these indicators: increases in student mathematics proficiencies in Pre-Algebra or Algebra courses; enrollment in Algebra I in the eighth or ninth grade, successful completion of Algebra I in the eighth or ninth grade; and, placement in 9th or 10th grade Geometry. Gains in teacher Pre-Algebra or Algebra I content knowledge and pedagogy, as measured by pre/post survey and/or assessments will also be used.

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 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, 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 program 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.
- Are collaborative in nature and bring school districts together as well as 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
 - Research paper on education grantmaking strategies
 - RFP for Education: Closing the Middle School Achievement Gap in Mathematics through an In-School Strategy
- 2) Participation in an information session 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. Also because grant applications can now only be submitted through our online application system, applySVCF, the information session will also be used to provide an overview of this new application system. To register for this session, please visit our website's calendar. More specific questions about program concepts, content, eligibility and evaluation can be asked through phone calls and in-person meetings with the program officer, as time permits.
- 3) Submission of grant application, including required attachments, through our new online application system, applySVCF ([link](#)). Applications must be submitted by 5 p.m. (PST).

Key Dates

November 12, 2012:	Release of RFP
November 15, 2012:	RFP Information Session (register through our online calendar)
December 7, 2012 – 5:00 p.m.:	Proposal submission deadline
February 2013:	Announcement of grant awards

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

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 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. 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

An 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 February 2013.

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 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

Grant application submission through our new online application system, applySVCF.

All applications must include the required attachments listed below:

- Attachment A:** Detailed line-item budget for the project (that includes details on how the community foundation's funding would be used)
- Attachment B:** Budget narrative for the project
- Attachment C:** Copy of your organization's current overall operating budget
- Attachment D:** Most recent audit, if available
- Attachment F:** Evidence of tax-exempt status
- Attachment G:** Memoranda of Understanding from collaborative partners (if appropriate)

MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions, please contact us at grants@siliconvalleycf.org or call 650.450.5540

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

About Silicon Valley Community Foundation

The vision of Silicon Valley Community Foundation advances innovative philanthropic solutions to challenging problems, engaging donors to make our region and world a better place for all.

The mission of Silicon Valley Community Foundation is to be a comprehensive center of philanthropy. Through visionary leadership, strategic grantmaking and world-class experiences, we partner with donors to strengthen the common good locally and throughout the world.

We value:

Collaboration	Integrity
Diversity	Public Accountability
Inclusiveness	Respect
Innovation	Responsiveness

At a Glance

Silicon Valley Community Foundation makes all forms of philanthropy more powerful. We serve as a catalyst and leader for innovative solutions to our region's most challenging problems. The community foundation has more than \$2 billion in assets under management and more than 1,500 philanthropic funds. As Silicon Valley's center of philanthropy, we provide individuals, families and corporations with simple and effective ways to give locally and around the world. Find out more at www.siliconvalleycf.org.



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

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