



# Request for Proposals

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 community foundation's research paper on the topic at <http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/content/education>.

The education strategy has a two-pronged approach: (1) in-school strategy, which seeks to increase the effectiveness of instruction during school hours and (2) an out-of-school strategy, which seeks to increase the number and effectiveness of extended learning time opportunities. This request for proposals focuses specifically on the out-of-school strategy. 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.

**Grant applications must be submitted through our new on-line application system, [applySVCF](#), by 5:00 p.m. (PST) on September 20, 2013. In order to be fair to all applicants there will be no exceptions to the deadline.**

## 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 English learners, students of color and low-income students.

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 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 and algebra instruction taught in the middle school grades, rigor and relevance of curriculum, level of teachers' expectations, and the availability of extended remedial 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 English learners, students of color and low-income 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 certified teachers.
- Deliver relevant and engaging curriculum that is consistent with common core state standards in mathematics; that provides deeper learning opportunities, specifically, students' problem-solving skills; and, that requires a higher order of questioning, analyzing and reasoning.

- Have a strong partnership with schools, school district administrators and other education stakeholders to ensure impact in and out of the school environment; 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 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**

- 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:

- Take a system-wide approach by ensuring that the program's impact feeds into school learning in terms of relevance and 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 target population to be reached and justification for that focus.
- Provide clear benchmarks for measuring progress.

### **Eligible Projects**

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 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 reference materials.** These may be found at <http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/content/education>.

- Research paper on the Education strategy
- RFP for Education: Closing the Middle School Achievement Gap in Mathematics through an Out-of-School Strategy

**2) Participate in the information session.** This is highly encouraged for those interested in responding to this RFP. Additionally, 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 asked through phone calls and in-person meetings with the program officer, as time permits.

**3) Submit grant application**, including required attachments, through our new online application system, [applySVCF](#). Applications must be submitted by 5 p.m. (PST) **September 20, 2013**.

## Key Dates

<b>August 23, 2013:</b>	Release of RFP
<b>September 3, 2013:</b>	RFP Information session (register through our <a href="#">online calendar</a> )
<b>September 20, 2013 5 p.m.:</b>	Proposal submission deadline
<b>December 2013:</b>	Announcement of grant awards

## Proposal Evaluation Criteria

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, 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 in the range of \$35,000 to \$75,000 for a maximum one-year period, depending on the type of grant awarded (i.e., planning or implementation) and scope of proposed activities. 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 will be considered as noted above and 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.

**Applicants will be informed of grant decisions in December 2013.**

### Evaluation, Monitoring and Grantee Learning Activities

- Grantees will be expected to meet the community foundation's requirements for a final financial and narrative report as well as a presentation to community foundation 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 research-based 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.

#### MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions, please contact us at [grants@siliconvalleycf.org](mailto: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](http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/enewsletters)

## About Silicon Valley Community Foundation

### Vision:

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

### Mission:

Silicon Valley Community Foundation is 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 \$2.9 billion in assets under management and more than 1,650 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](http://www.siliconvalleycf.org).



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To read more about Silicon Valley Community Foundation  
visit [www.siliconvalleycf.org](http://www.siliconvalleycf.org)

release date 8.23.2013