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 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. The goal of this strategy is for all students to 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: an in-school strategy, which seeks to increase the effectiveness of instruction during school hours, and an out-of-school strategy, which seeks to increase the number and effectiveness of extended learning time opportunities. This request for proposals, or RFP, targets closing the middle school achievement gap in mathematics through an out-of-school strategy. 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 no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, September 19, 2012. 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 instruction taught in the middle school grades, rigor and relevance of curriculum, level of teachers' 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 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

- 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:

- 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.
- Are collaborative in nature 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 reference materials found at http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/content/education
- Key Dates
- Grant Applicant FAQ sheet
- Research paper
- RFP for Education: Closing the Middle School Achievement Gap in Mathematics through an Out-of-School Strategy

2) Participate in the information session.

We encourage all those interested in responding to this RFP to participate in the information session. 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 RFP information session.

Only those organizations considering a response to a RFP should attend an information session. Follow-up phone consultations and in-person meetings will be available with community foundation staff as time permits.

3) Submit proposal.

Submissions should be in electronic PDF format. Please do not send scanned documents

All proposals must be received by email no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, September 19 2012. There will be no exceptions to the deadline.

Key Dates

September 5, 2012:   Information session (Please visit our website to register)

September 19, 2012, 5 p.m.:   Proposal submission deadline

December 2012:   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 $35,000 to $75,000 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 $35,000.

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.

Applicants will be informed of grant decisions in December 2012.

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** addressing proposal information requirement questions specified on the cover sheet – a maximum of eight pages, 12-point type, margins of no less than one 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. (Note that this is not required for returning applicants unless there have been changes to the board of directors from the previous applications.)

❏   **Attachment F**: Evidence of tax-exempt status

❏   **Attachment G**: Memoranda of Understanding from collaborative partners (if appropriate)

❏   Send to **grantproposals@siliconvalleycf.org**

Submissions must be received by email no later than Wednesday, September 19, 2012 by 5:00 p.m.

Thank you for your application.

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

Application Cover Sheet

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

Submit one electronic* copy to:

grantproposals@siliconvalleycf.org

*Please email submissions in PDF format. Please do not email scanned documents. If you have questions, please contact us at grants@siliconvalleycf.org

General Information

Date: _____

Amount Requested: $ _____   Duration of project: _____

Project Name:_____

Name of Institution/Organization: _____

Organizational Budget: $_____   School District/County: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip:_____

Website Address:_____

Name and title of primary contact for proposal: _____

Phone: _____   Fax: _____   Email: _____

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

Phone: _____   Fax:_____   Email: _____

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 (school, school district and/or county)?

4. What is the demographic population that will be served by your project? *(Please provide specifics, e.g., percentage of English learners, students of color and low-income students, 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—including 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 organizational 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. Collaborative partners/agencies (if any) and their contact information.

About Silicon Valley Community Foundation

The vision of Silicon Valley Community Foundation is to advance 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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