



# request for proposals

Join us in Accelerating Student Success  
in the Common Core

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## Introduction

Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF) addresses our community's most challenging problems. Despite the area's great wealth, residents are challenged by so much – lack of affordable housing, financial instability, the precarious safety and insecurity of immigrants and persistent gaps in student achievement. Through its discretionary grantmaking, the community foundation addresses these and other issues including support for people to engage in civic affairs and the public decisions that directly affect their lives.

SVCF recognizes that to achieve meaningful progress on these issues, collaboration is critical. By issuing requests for proposals (RFP), we hope to solicit the best ideas from nonprofits, public agencies, research institutions and community organizations serving San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, and to partner together on solutions. The focus of this RFP is on accelerating student success in alignment with Common Core State Standards. We invite you to apply.

## Grant Application Deadline

Grant applications must be submitted through our online application system **Apply SVCF by 11:59 p.m. (PST) Friday, June 7, 2019.**

## The Problem

Up until the end of third grade, most children are learning to read. Beginning in the fourth grade, however, they are reading to learn, using their skills to gain more information in subjects such as mathematics and science, to solve problems, to think critically and to share that knowledge with the world around them. However, nearly half of the region's rising fourth grade students do not read at grade level.<sup>1</sup> And reading proficiency remains even more of a challenge for our most vulnerable learners with only one-third of the region's low-income students reading at grade level.<sup>2</sup> Addressing this achievement gap has far-reaching implications for students' future opportunities in college and career, especially for those students who are low-income, English learners or in the foster care system.

<sup>1</sup> California Department of Education. (2018). English Language Arts Smarter Balanced Assessment Results. California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress. Retrieved from <https://caaspp.cde.ca.gov/sb2018/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## The Opportunity

The Common Core State Standards are designed to improve students' chances of success in college and careers by setting uniform standards for what students should know by the end of each school year and by the time they graduate from high school. The standards in mathematics require that students will not only be able to solve problems but explain how they did so. This means mastery of both literacy and core mathematical concepts is now necessary for students leaving elementary school and transitioning to middle school.

Therefore, integrating reading and writing in daily mathematics instruction and emphasis on collaborative activities and problem solving is critically important in grades four and five. Emerging best practices in the field demonstrate that an integrated approach addresses both students' need for continued literacy development as well as exposure to mathematics content.

We also know that many students require additional support beyond what they receive during the school day. Therefore, afterschool and summer learning opportunities, particularly for struggling students who are low-income, are also important. Proposed extended learning programs should engage parents, guardians and families as active partners in efforts to strengthen student literacy and mathematics outcomes.

## Program Goal

SVCF believes all children deserve high-quality learning opportunities. Every year, local districts and schools serve over 22,000 low-income fourth and fifth grade students and employ an estimated 647 teachers for those grades. Our goal is to invest in strategies that will accelerate students' academic performance in mathematics while strengthening their literacy skills. SVCF has chosen to focus this grant opportunity on the following:

- 1. Developing innovative approaches** to providing teacher professional development focused on integrated instruction and peer collaboration. This includes research to determine teaching and learning impact, as well as student and school system-level outcomes.
- 2. Supporting extended learning programs** that are aligned with instruction during the school day and include a match of Local Control Funding Formula resources. SVCF is receptive to initial planning grants that allow possible collaborators to come together and explore a potential partnership.

The most competitive proposals will be those that demonstrate use of both strategies described above as well as collaborative approaches that engage district leaders, school site leaders, teachers and parents/guardians as active participants in student success.

## Key Dates

**May 13, 2019:**

Application process opens

**June 7, 2019, 11:59 p.m.:**

Proposal submission deadline

**August 2019:**

Announcement of grant awards

## Application Process

**1. Review reference materials** including **SVCF's research brief** on Accelerating Student Success in the Common Core. These may be found at [siliconvalleycf.org/grants](http://siliconvalleycf.org/grants).

**2. Participate in an information session.** This is highly encouraged for those responding to this RFP. Because all grant applications are submitted online, these sessions provide an overview of SVCF's online application system, [Apply SVCF](#).

Additionally, the information sessions will provide an opportunity for applicants to review the RFP in more depth and ask questions. To register for one of the information sessions, please click on the following links. [Register for an information session](#).

**3. Submit grant application**, including required attachments, through our online application system, [Apply SVCF](#), beginning May 13, 2019. **Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. (PST) Friday, June 7, 2019.** A guide to the online application system can be found [here](#).

More specific questions about project eligibility, proposal process and evaluation can be addressed through phone calls and in-person meetings with the program officer, as time permits.

## Proposal Eligibility Criteria

- Organizations serving San Mateo and/or Santa Clara counties. Organizations headquartered outside the two-county region may apply but should demonstrate significant service to these areas or partner with a local organization that can.
- 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.
- Organizations with religious affiliations will be considered for funding only if the project for which they seek support addresses the needs of the wider community without regard to religious beliefs.

## **Proposal Evaluation Criteria**

SVCF awards grants on a competitive basis. Successful proposals will need to meet the minimum eligibility criteria and provide a clear and compelling narrative about how the proposed project will advance SVCF's program goals. Proposals will also be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Clarity of project description and strategies/activities to be implemented to reach desired outcomes
- Relevant and measurable outcomes and indicators of success. Ability to report on student improvements in reading and mathematics proficiency for all students and on quality improvement over the course of the program.
- Strategies that are based on well-tested models and can be scaled or expanded regionally, while maintaining local relevance
- Achievable timeline (12 months) that corresponds to the key activities
- Organizational capacity to implement project including: staffing, leadership, operational and fiscal management
- Established track record of work related to proposed project or likelihood of success with a new project
- Ability to leverage financial, human and technical resources from other partners leading to greater impact
- Ability to contribute successes and lessons learned with the field
- Approved Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) in place with dedicated funding to support proposed initiative activities. These matching funds must equal at least 50 percent of the amount requested in the proposal.

## **Awards**

Up to \$200,000 will be awarded to lead school districts, charter school networks, established elementary school collaboratives, and other nonprofit organizations. Please note, Local Education Agency-led projects that align in-school teacher development and extended learning opportunities/parent engagement are most competitive for awards.

Applicants should include a budget narrative that makes clear the necessity of the project's specific line-items.

Please note that project proposal narratives may be posted publicly on our website to reflect our value of transparency and encourage learning among grantees, future applicants and the community at large.

## **Review and Selection Process**

An advisory committee with issue expertise will help staff review all proposals recommended for funding to SVCF's Board of Directors. Applicants may receive a site visit, telephone call and/or other type of communication from SVCF staff as part of the review process.

**Applicants will be informed of grant decisions in August 2019.**

## **Evaluation, Monitoring and Grantee Learning Activities**

Grantees will be expected to meet SVCF's reporting and evaluation requirements as well as be willing and available to talk with SVCF staff and donor advisors if requested. Grantees will also be asked to participate in periodic meetings to share information on project successes, challenges and lessons learned to further the overall program goals of this RFP.

Thank you very much for your interest in responding to this RFP and in joining us in accelerating student success in the Common Core. We look forward to reviewing your proposal.



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## **About Silicon Valley Community Foundation**

Silicon Valley Community Foundation advances innovative philanthropic solutions to challenging problems. We engage donors and corporations from Silicon Valley, across the country and around the globe to make our region and world better for all. Our passion for helping people and organizations achieve their philanthropic dreams has created a global philanthropic enterprise committed to the belief that possibilities start here. Learn more at [www.siliconvalleycf.org](http://www.siliconvalleycf.org).

## **More Information**

If you have questions, please contact us at  
[grants@siliconvalleycf.org](mailto:grants@siliconvalleycf.org) or call 650.930.9885

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