



## **Central Oregon Regional Action Initiative**

# **Elements of a Competitive Proposal**

**Competitive applications will demonstrate:**

**1. The community's need for a community school program.**

Communities should clearly state why they want to implement or sustain a community school and how it will help to improve their community in a significant and lasting way.

*For example:*

*A community may have a problem with youth who have no place to go after the school day. As a result, the community has seen an increase in vandalism, under-age drinking and theft among youth ages 9-18. An after-school program would provide a structured, safe environment for youth and, at the same time, decrease youth crime rates.*

**2. Broad community support for the proposal.**

Community support is defined as stakeholders outside of the school district who give their support (time, in-kind donations of materials, or contribute financially) to the community school. These individuals represent the business, nonprofit, government and/or civic leaders/volunteer community members who support the community school.

School districts will most likely be the lead partner for implementing or sustaining a community school. However, community school plans should address how stakeholders are involved. Compelling proposals will outline the role, responsibility, contribution and duration of involvement for each stakeholder.

*For example:*

- 1. Parents could volunteer to teach a course or mentor students in the after-school program.*
- 2. A local business could donate materials for the after-school program.*
- 3. A nonprofit human services agency could host an evening parenting class at the school.*
- 4. Individuals and businesses can make a financial contribution to the community school.*

**Letters of support:**

Please ask stakeholders to demonstrate their support for the community school with a letter. The letter should include the name and contact information of the letter's author, their role in the community school, the amount of their support (if in-kind or a financial

contribution), the duration of their involvement and why they think a community school is important for their community.

Each proposal should include a minimum of 3 letters of support from stakeholders.

**3. Community partnerships in support of the community school.**

Community partnerships are defined as an agency partner outside of the school district who is actively involved in the community school. Agency partners may include a local nonprofit, business, civic group or government agency. Community partnerships will look different in each community. Compelling proposals will identify community partners and outline their role, responsibility, duration of involvement and benefit to the community school.

*For example:*

- 1. A nonprofit working with individuals and families in need could coordinate with the Community School Coordinator to operate a clothing closet at the community school.*
- 2. The community school could host regular visits from a dental van, staffed by volunteer dentists, to provide students and their families routine dental care at little or no cost.*
- 3. The community school could be a site for local government agencies to host forums for community members in the evenings or on weekends, such as a town hall meeting with local elected officials.*

**Letters of support:**

Please ask community partners to demonstrate their support for the community school through a letter of support and/or memorandum of understanding. The letter should include the community partner's name and contact information, name of lead staff liason, the community partner's role and responsibility within community school, the value of their in-kind support, the duration of their involvement and why they are committed to the community school.

Each proposal should include a minimum of 3 letters of support from community partners.

**4. The community school will promote beneficial, long-lasting change for students, their families and the community.**

Beneficial, long-lasting change is defined by the successful outcomes listed in the RFP that include:

- readiness for school
- improved academic achievement for students
- improved student attendance
- increased parent involvement and level of engagement at their child's school
- improved student relationships with adults
- improved access to social services, including medical and dental care
- increased community engagement
- increased financial and in-kind resources for school-based services and activities

Communities must define the outcomes they will seek to achieve through the community school and include a plan for tracking these benchmarks.

For example:

- *One outcome of the community school is to improve academic achievement for students. To accomplish this goal, the school will track test scores at the beginning, middle and end of the school year with 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to determine if tutoring during the after-school program for students in these grade levels resulted in improved test scores.*
- *Another outcome could be a school's goal of increasing parent involvement through the community school. Parent involvement could be defined as a parent's attendance at their child's activity, volunteering in the school and increased communication with teachers and school staff. To track this goal, parents could be asked to complete a survey at the end of the school year assessing their participation in extra-curricular events involving their child, level of comfort with the school, its teachers and staff and familiarity with the school building. The school can also track volunteer hours among parents.*
- *A third outcome could be increased community engagement as a result of the community school. This benchmark can be measured by tracking the number of community events and adult education classes held at the school in the evenings or on weekends. Attendance at each of these events can also be documented. Participants could be asked to complete a short survey assessing their satisfaction with the event/class and involvement in the school.*

## **5. Central Oregon Regional Action Initiative Funding Objectives**

A competitive proposal will address the Central Oregon Regional Action Initiative's funding objectives listed in the RFP. The project narrative should contain a description of the community school plan, the role and responsibilities of all community partners and stakeholders and a plan for measuring results.

The project narrative should:

- Document a compelling need for the community school.
- Detail activities, timetable, who will benefit and how, and how the community school plan fits with the Central Oregon RAI funding objectives.
- Demonstrate how the community school will meet the current needs of the community.
- Include goals for how the community school will strengthen the community.

The funding objectives are:

- Improve student achievement
- Increase parent involvement
- Build community engagement through broad community support
- Foster community partnerships
- Create opportunities for beneficial, long-lasting change for students, their families and the community

- Leverage funds and other resources (in kind donations, time, information) to support community school programs
- Develop sustainable community school programs

*For example:*

*The community school will include tutoring as a component of the after-school program. The Community Schools Coordinator will work with teachers to identify students who could benefit from extra help with a particular subject, such as math, science or reading. The Coordinator will then assign a tutor to work one-on-one with the student throughout the school year to improve their proficiency in the subject.*

*A community school can work towards strengthening community by increasing volunteerism. For example, the Community School Coordinator could recruit a professional from the banking community to teach an evening financial literacy class for adults.*

## **6. Evaluation plan**

A competitive proposal will have a realistic evaluation plan. The proposal should include:

- Specific outcomes of the community school and why project activities are expected to achieve these outcomes.
- Plans for evaluating the effectiveness of the community school.

The evaluation plan should outline how the school will measure the accomplishment of each objective included in the project narrative.

*For example:*

For evaluation purposes, a community school could track:

- improved student achievement through test scores
- increased parent involvement at the school
- enhanced community support through increased support through cash or in-kind donations, and community partnerships
- increased volunteerism

The evaluation plan could describe how parents will be asked to participate in community school related activities and report on the number of parents who responded to the request.

## **7. Sustainability plan**

A competitive proposal will include a detailed plan for securing future funding to sustain the community school after the OCF grant. Sustainability plans that have multiple sources of funding are generally more compelling than those that rely on one source of revenue. Generating revenue to sustain the community school should start well in advance of the expiration date for OCF grant funding. A weak sustainability plan would rely on finding funding to replace grant funds with little or no detail as to how the applicant intends to do this.

*For example:*

The sustainability plan for a community school could include projected funding from multiple sources such as:

- Program income from participant fees for the after-school and adult education programs
- Donations, both cash and in-kind, from community members and local businesses
- Grant funding that includes state, federal and private foundation grants
- School district financial and in-kind support. Over time, school districts could assume the staff costs for key positions, such as the community school coordinator or janitorial staff. The district could also elect to pay for expenses necessary to operate the community school such as utilities.

**8. Other sources of support, both in-kind & cash donations.**

Competitive proposal will list all sources of support, both in-kind and cash, including the amount committed to the community school.

**9. Leverage OCF resources.**

Competitive proposals will demonstrate how OCF funds will be leveraged to support and sustain the community school.

*For example:*

- *If awarded, a community could try to leverage a grant from OCF with grant applications to federal, state and private funding sources to support and sustain the community school. The OCF grant could be seed money for the community school.*
- *OCF funds can also be leveraged through increased community engagement in the community school. The grant can be a catalyst to create new community partnerships and attract new stakeholders for the community school.*

**10. Project budget.**

The project budget should reflect both revenues and expenditures, though some revenues may be speculative. Ideally the budget reflects how OCF Central Oregon RAI funds would be used. The itemized budget should be realistic and consistent with the project narrative. Budget revenues, both cash and in-kind, should equal budgeted expenditures.

\* An example three-year projected budget is attached.