

Oregon

Community

Foundation

Request for Applications
Out-of-School Time
Program Quality Improvement Learning Community
(Due Date: June 14, 2019)

Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) and The Ford Family Foundation (TFFF) seek proposals from out-of-school time programs in Oregon and Siskiyou County, CA that wish to participate in a three-year, highly structured Learning Community focused on program quality improvement and evaluation capacity building. Grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$60,000 per year will be awarded to out-of-school programs that currently serve middle school-aged youth and are focused on promotion of academic success for low-income youth, youth of color and/or rural youth.

OCF and TFFF have identified middle school as a key transition point and an opportunity to combat socioeconomic, geographic and racial inequities in student success. Research has shown that quality out-of-school time programs can support positive youth development and increase engagement with school, thus improving attendance, boosting academic performance and increasing the likelihood of high school graduation and post-secondary attainment. Successful programs are also positively associated with social-emotional skills such as creativity, resiliency and problem solving, which are known to contribute to the likelihood of success in school and life.

The research-based Youth Program Quality (YPQ) framework outlines components of quality programs, including providing a safe and supportive environment, positive interaction with peers and adults, and youth engagement approaches that include opportunities for youth to plan and reflect. Use of the YPQ tools and training by out-of-school time programs has been shown to support improvement of program quality, and to lead to higher student engagement. Further, current efforts by OCF and TFFF to support out-of-school time programs have confirmed the challenges faced by organizations in collecting and using data about their students and programs. Building evaluation capacity more broadly will support organizational learning, program improvement and the ability of programs to demonstrate their success.

Scope of Applications

OCF and TFFF seek proposals from out-of-school time programs that wish to deepen the effectiveness of their current programs by joining an existing highly structured Learning Community focused on program quality improvement through the use of the YPQ tools. In addition, staff will engage in evaluation capacity building, strengthening efforts to gather and use program quality and other types of data to improve programs.

Grants will provide three years of core program operations support that will allow staff to participate in Learning Community activities and integrate quality improvement practices into their programs. These practices are more effective when program and front-line staff are engaged, which tight budget constraints can hinder. Grants can cover:

- Increased hours for permanent staff or hiring of temporary staff to free up permanent staff to participate in Learning Community, assessment, reflection, planning and program improvement implementation activities.
- Travel to all trainings and Learning Community activities (Learning Community expenses like trainings, accommodations and food will be covered directly by OCF and should not be included). Typically, travel costs to centrally-located trainings will be \$300-\$600/year.

- Direct costs associated with program improvement that are identified through the program quality assessment and subsequent action planning in the Learning Community. These exact costs are initially unknown, so it is fine if the budget line is vague.
- Other costs identified by the grantee that would be a barrier to full participation in the Learning Community and implementation of program quality improvement.

To deepen the quality of available out-of-school time programs, participating programs will engage with a program quality framework, receive related professional development, and build capacity for evaluation and organizational learning.

Eligibility, Application and Expectations

Grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$60,000 per year will be awarded for three years to out-of-school programs with existing middle school programming that promotes student success. Grant size may stay the same each year to support continued capacity to engage in the Learning Community activities. Eligible organizations include nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations, tribal governments, public agencies, school districts and colleges located in Oregon and Siskiyou County, CA.

The application summary form, narrative questions and required documentation can be found on the OCF website at <http://www.oregoncf.org/grants-scholarships/grants/k12-student-success>.

As a condition of the grant, it is expected that all grantees will fully participate in the Learning Community, which includes:

- In-person Kick-off training: October 17-18, Roseburg
- YPQ assessment in November 2019 (estimated time to do observation, assessment and related reporting: 15 - 18 total staff hours).
- Attendance of two staff members (decision-maker and someone familiar with programming) at an annual convening on January 23-24, 2020, Silverton. Future dates not yet set.
- Participation in at least four of ten half day trainings related to YPQ improvement plans. Trainings are located throughout Oregon on a variety of dates.
- Engage in evaluation capacity building activities integrated into the above dates, including:
 - Identify a staff person who will receive capacity building support and will share what they learn within their organization.
 - Participate in staff interviews to reflect on Learning Community experiences.
 - Share aggregate data about students/programming with fellow grantees and funders.
- Participate in webinars with topics to be determined depending on needs of grantees.

Note: Remaining 2020 and 2021 Learning Community dates and locations are not yet confirmed. For additional background information on the YPQ and the Institute for Youth Success, which administers this process in Oregon, check: <http://educationnorthwest.org/youth-program-quality-intervention>.

Compliance with the expectations will be an eligibility condition for grant renewal in subsequent year.

Completed applications must be received at OCF by **the end of the day on Friday, June 14**. A funding decision will be made in September 2019.

For Additional Information

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