



Opportunities Discovered • Potential Realized

Request for Proposals: Family Engagement & Advocacy

THE STOLTE FAMILY FOUNDATION

Located in Seattle, Washington, the Stolte Family Foundation (SFF) is a private foundation founded by Chris and Heidi Stolte. With a small team and annual grantmaking reaching \$5 million in 2019, the Foundation encourages a culture of continuous learning, empowerment, collaborative engagement, and entrepreneurial spirit. We are a mission-driven team that is motivated by a desire for impact.

SFF believes in creating a sustainable future where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential. To that end, we invest in organizations that champion systemic changes in education, and environmental policy and practice. To ensure the greatest impact, we take a holistic approach—listening and learning about why things are the way they are and building and leveraging relationships in the community to identify and implement the most effective solutions possible.

SFF is committed to racial equity, and we believe in working as partners to bring about positive change. We understand the urgent nature of this work while recognizing that complex challenges and empowerment take time. We aim to build trust, and we assume personal responsibility so that we show up as trustworthy. We seek to challenge our assumptions and welcome feedback.

To learn more about the foundation, please visit www.stoltefamilyfoundation.org.

SFF's Focus in Education

Rationale

There is strong evidence that families play an important role in their children's development and learning. When families are involved in their children's education, children are more likely to: earn higher grades and test scores; attend school regularly; have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school; and graduate and go on to postsecondary education.ⁱ

All families want the best for their children. However, not all families have the tools, resources, and supports they need to successfully navigate the education system and help their children to reach their full potential. While resilient, families of color in communities impacted by poverty face additional barriers. Educators and staff who work with children also want them to do well, but they may need support to work effectively with families as equal partners.

Programs that support families can make a difference. With resources and support, families can become more engaged in their children's education and help increase their children's social, emotional, and cognitive skills.ⁱⁱ When families gain civic leadership skills and organize to hold schools and systems accountable, research shows that they can make positive changes in policy, practice, and resources.ⁱⁱⁱ



Whether in homes, schools, or communities, we believe that the strongest family engagement programs are informed by research, engage families in learning, and honor families' strengths and cultures. *Focusing SFF's resources on families of color in resilient communities most impacted by poverty can help address Washington's stark racial and economic opportunity gaps.*

Our Funding Strategies

Working closely with our partners, SFF will take a three-pronged approach to funding in education. Over the next several years, we will:

- Support schools and community-based programs that engage families in their children's learning through leveraging partnerships and research-based practices. *(Please see Selection Criteria below for more information about priority research-based practices)*
- Invest in advocacy for public resources for high-quality programs for children and their families.
- Invest in culturally responsive, research-based home visiting to strengthen and expand supports for families with young children.

The Change We Seek

More families have the support and resources they need to guide their children's development and learning. Increased social, emotional, and cognitive skills lay the groundwork for positive school and life outcomes.

THE REQUEST: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

Overview

SFF requests proposals for community- and school-based programs that:

- Engage families in their children's learning; and/or
- Engage families as advocates for their children's education.

We aim to invest in a range of programs that are tailored to the needs of families and communities in our region.

Organizations are encouraged to build on existing programs and supports for families, using SFF funding to supplement or enhance those efforts. *Proposals for brand new programs will not be competitive for funding.*

Funding Available: SFF will grant up to \$2.25 million total over three years

Request Amount: SFF will consider requests totaling \$150,000-\$375,000 over three years

Grant Period: July 2019-June 2022

Note: We do not know how many proposals we will receive but anticipate funding 6-9 organizations.

Eligibility

SFF will consider requests for programs serving families of color in communities most impacted by poverty outside the City of Seattle in King County and along the I-5 corridor in Pierce and Snohomish Counties. We are focusing on this area because we have heard from our partners, peers, and advocates that families pushed out of the city due to the rising cost of living need culturally-responsive supports in the communities where they now reside.

SFF will focus our resources on programs serving families with children age 0-12.

Non-profit organizations (such as social services organizations and fiscally-sponsored community groups) and public institutions (such as educational services districts and library systems) are eligible to apply.

We are looking to support organizations that are firmly rooted in their communities. *Culturally connected organizations and organizations led by people of color are encouraged to apply.*

Ineligible activities: Drop-in programs, court-ordered programs, social services (separate from activities that engage families in their children’s learning), one-time events or programs. Home-based services are not eligible for funding under this request for proposals. SFF is supporting culturally responsive home visiting through separate funding partnerships.

Eligible expenses: All aspects of program development and implementation are eligible for funding, including planning, materials, supplies and equipment, incentives, transportation, staffing and retention, professional development, community and partner engagement, and evaluation. SFF will provide flexible program support and will contribute to organizations’ operating costs.

Selection Criteria

We will look for programs that have clear goals and preliminary plans and include connections with relevant resources, initiatives, and partners. We will consider the organization’s prior experience working with families and the other funding that is available for planning and implementation.

While we are interested in supporting a variety of program models and goals, we will prioritize those that aim to reflect the following research-based practices:

- **Respond to a community need:** We will look for a clear understanding of local community and family needs and the likely pool of participating families. We would like to know how families were consulted in shaping the program and how they will continue to be involved.
- **Actively engage families in learning:** We seek to understand how interactive activities will provide support and direction to families in order to build their skills and confidence.
- **Culturally responsive and strengths-based:** We would like to know how the program will be responsive to families’ cultures and languages, honor their strengths, and treat staff and families as equal partners.
- **Sustain engagement over time:** We believe that the strongest program designs will engage with the same family more than once. We will look at how program intensity and duration facilitate positive outcomes.



For more information about research on family engagement, check out the resources and links at the end of this document.

Timeline

RFP Release: March 20, 2019

Proposals Due: April 29, 2019

Interviews with Finalists: May 14-23, 2019

Grant Decisions: June 17, 2019

Process

We anticipate that there will be some back and forth with applicants via email and phone during May and early June. Interviews with finalists will be a chance for us to get to know one another, share more information about SFF, and further develop our understanding of each organization's values, experience, and goals. We believe that getting to know an organization as a whole can help us enter into a partnership with eyes wide open and reasonable expectations. We are committed to transparency about our decision-making and will ask for feedback after this process has concluded.

SFF aims to learn alongside our partners. To do this, we will seek opportunities to hear directly about progress and challenges, and when appropriate, to visit programs to see meaningful connections with children and families in person. We recognize that a more hands-on approach takes time and resources, and will do our best to engage in ways that our partners recommend. In addition to regular communications, an annual written report and/or in-person conversation will be an opportunity to share learning, stories, and ideas for support beyond the grant. We will ask for data that is aligned with the outcomes and evaluation plans proposed by our partners.

We plan to build opportunities to share learning with and among funded organizations, tailored to the cohort's needs and preferences. We will work with the cohort to determine what structure and frequency would be most beneficial and sustainable to all involved.

Proposal

The following questions can serve as a guide for proposal submissions. We are open to receiving proposals in a format prepared for other funders if it speaks to the content below. We think that five pages is likely enough space for a narrative, but we do not have strict page limits.

Applicant Information

- Organization legal name, primary contact, phone, email, and website, if applicable.
- Brief background, including your organization's constituency (including income and race/ethnicity) and geographic region served.
- Describe your organization's commitment to racial equity. How does your organization reflect and engage the community it serves? Please speak to staff and board composition.
- Describe a recent success or relevant experience that exemplifies your organization's ability to carry out the proposed work. What has been the impact?

Project Description & Rationale

- Briefly state the funding request. How will SFF funding enhance, strengthen, or expand on current programming?
- Provide context for this request, including data (narratives, stories, numbers), if available.
- Summarize the core aspects of the program, including intensity, duration, and number of participants.
- Please speak to how the proposed work responds to a community need; actively engages families in learning; is culturally responsive and strengths-based; and sustains engagement over time.

Project Workplan

- Briefly describe the results anticipated by the end of the grant period. How will you measure those results?
- Include proposed activities with anticipated dates of completion.
- If applicable, briefly describe key partners and their role in developing and implementing the proposed work. Note if/how they will be financially compensated.

Budget

- List budget items for the program and describe the intended use of grant dollars.
- Note whether other funds have been secured for the program. If so, please include the funding source and amount.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions about this Request for Proposals or would like to discuss your organization's eligibility, please contact Anna Guarneri at aguarneri@stoltefamilyfoundation.org or (206) 453-0444. We would love to know if you plan to apply, but outreach in advance of the deadline is not required. Please submit proposals to Anna via email.

RESOURCES

[Why Family Engagement Matters for Student and School Success](#). This recent brief from the Global Family Research Project is focused on making the latest research on family engagement accessible and actionable for families and educators.

[Principles of Effective Family Engagement](#). The National Association for the Education of Young Children has developed and shared principles for effective practice in engaging families in children's early learning.

[Capturing the Ripple Effect](#). This handout from the Annenberg Institute conveys how initiatives that develop parents as leaders can set off a positive ripple effect in their communities and beyond, creating greater opportunities for children.

[Family Engagement Brief](#). In this brief, the National Center for Families Learning explores some of the evidence supporting approaches to family engagement with examples that span public education systems, non-profit organizations, and a public library system.

[Dual Capacity-Building Framework](#). Based on research and best practices, Karen Mapp and Paul Kuttner developed an influential framework for designing family engagement initiatives that build capacity among educators and families to partner with one another around student success.

ⁱ Henderson and Mapp (2002). *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*. Retrieved from <https://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

ⁱⁱ MDRC (2013). *The Impact of Family Involvement on the Education of Children Ages 3 to 8*. Retrieved from <https://www.mdrc.org/publication/impact-family-involvement-education-children-ages-3-8>

ⁱⁱⁱ Henderson and Mapp (2002).