

Request for Proposal – Relationship Development with Organizations and Individuals Interested in Advancing Support for the First Amendment in California’s Central Valley

Central Valley Foundation

Overview

The Central Valley Foundation (CVF) board is advancing its longtime support for the First Amendment by launching a new community-focused initiative. This initiative is launching at a critical historical point: Americans’ support for First Amendment rights as the underpinning of democracy is waning at a time when those rights are facing increasing stresses. New technologies and communication systems are creating new questions about how the First Amendment applies to modern life. Given this state of affairs, CVF’s First Amendment Initiative seeks to establish California’s Central Valley as a laboratory for deep civic engagement with the principles of a free press, expression, and speech. CVF will support local interventions designed to increase support for and action around the First Amendment. CVF is committed to sharing lessons learned from local efforts for national application. By supporting ambitious change locally in the area served by the Foundation, CVF hopes to spark a national re-commitment to First Amendment principles.

The heart of CVF’s initiative will be to support a small number of communities as they develop cross-sector, in-depth interventions that involve on-the-ground activities to enhance understanding of and strengthen support for the First Amendment. The community interventions should seek to change an entire community’s support for the First Amendment in a way that leads to increased civic engagement.

The scope of work CVF hopes to inspire is ambitious and can be difficult: successful partners will have to build a local network of organizations to collectively design and carry out a local initiative to change attitudes on a highly complex issue. Because few, if any, communities will be immediately ready to take on this work, CVF is seeking a consultant to support relationship and program development with potential partners in advance of its grant-making process.

About the Central Valley Foundation

The Central Valley Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit philanthropic organization founded in 1994 by Susan and the late James B. McClatchy, looks for opportunities to advance English Learner students, promote First Amendment awareness and action, and improve the quality of life in California’s Central Valley.

For over 20 years, CVF has supported activities and educational programs that promote awareness of and support for the First Amendment’s freedom of speech and the press and seeks to accelerate this area of work through this initiative.

California's Central Valley is world renowned for its productive agricultural land; however, the region is home to several major cities and millions of diverse Californians. In addition, the region contains a wide variation in terms of demographics, community size, socioeconomic status, languages spoken, and political attitudes. This diversity defines the Central Valley as an ideal location for the Foundation to support local efforts on this complex issue that can be applied nationally.

Scope of Work and Deliverables

CVF seeks to hire a consultant for a five to six month effort to contact, develop relationships, and explore possible program ideas with a wide variety of Central Valley nonprofit, academic, and civic leaders. Under the guidance of the CVF CEO and with the support of the Initiative Launch Coordination contractor, the Community Relationship Coordination contractor will meet with leaders in all parts of the Central Valley to:

- Identify and inspire interest among others in participating in CVF's First Amendment Initiative
- Solicit introductions to additional organizations and individuals that might be interested in the work
- Serve as a thought partner to individuals interested in the idea to identify potential projects and partners
- Introduce interested individuals to others
- Develop a database of all contacts
- Promote the importance of the First Amendment through community contacts
- Inform related CVF First Amendment activities

CVF will look for a contractor able to reach out to a large number of Central Valley communities and diverse individuals to engage the widest swath of partners possible in terms of geographic and demographic representation, community connections, and approach to the First Amendment (e.g. legal, media, education, community organizing, etc.).

Initiative Scope

The contractor will inform the Foundation's efforts to carry out its initiative grant-making process. The contractor will identify potential collaborative grant seekers who will be asked to:

- Submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) describing their aspirations for increasing awareness of and support for First Amendment issues in their community, their experience in taking on this or similar work, and any steps they've taken to engage others in building shared aspirations.
- Participate in a Foundation-supported program development and planning process to flesh out the particular focus of the grant proposal, program design, collaborators' roles, collaborative governance, budget, implementation steps and milestones, risk mitigation, and impact measurement.

- Submit a formal grant request for CVF board consideration.

Through this process, CVF will fund cross-sector, in-depth interventions in two or three Central Valley communities that involve on-the-ground activities to substantially change local understanding of and support for the First Amendment. Funded interventions will meet the following parameters.

- *Central Valley.* All interventions will take place in the Central Valley composed of the twelve counties from Sacramento and Yolo in the north to Tulare and Kings in the south and including El Dorado, Fresno, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Placer, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus.
- *Broad Impact.* Respondents must agree to seek significant change in attitudes and action within one geographic community (such as a city, grouping of nearby communities, or county).
- *Community Size.* CVF will prioritize eligible projects in communities that are optimal for learning: large enough to have strong civic organizations and be able to secure supporting resources, but small enough to be able to show how collaborative interventions have broadly impacted the community.
- *Cross-Sector Collaboration.* Respondents must be ready to involve at least three categories of organizations within the collaborative. Categories include locally-based nonprofit, nonprofits based outside of the Central Valley, media organization (private or public), local government (city or county), local school district, and local or regional post-secondary school (public or private).
- *Required Categories.* Respondent collaborations must include at least one local nonprofit organization and either a local school district or local government. Although local school districts and/or governments must be included, these organizations do not have to be the collaborative lead; in many situations, a community-based organization may be the best fit as the primary driver of the collaboration.
- *Commitment to Data Collection.* Respondents must commit to collecting and sharing data on the success of their interventions and what has been learned.

The contractor will not be engaged in the grant selection or ongoing initiative process. More information about the First Amendment Initiative is included in Appendix A.

Terms of Agreement

The contractor will begin work in Fall 2018. The breadth of work – identifying individuals to talk with, scheduling conversations, phone meetings, in person meetings, and travel throughout the Central Valley – will require significant time. Although the time requirement will vary significantly day-to-day, on average the consultant may be expected to spend 20-30 hours weekly during the project and may spend up to 35-40 hours in some weeks. The project will last for approximately five to six months; the specific amount of time required to complete the project will depend upon a variety of factors including the number of contacts made, number of phone and in-person meetings held, and extent of guidance provided to interested groups and individuals.

Desired Qualifications

Ideal applicants will possess the following traits, expertise, and experience:

- A commitment to growing support for the First Amendment and understanding of the First Amendment's role in supporting a vibrant democracy
- Experience working with diverse communities in the Central Valley
- Experience working with community-based organizations, schools, colleges and universities, and civic leaders
- Background in community or political organizing¹ or related skills
- A gregarious personality and readiness to reach out to new people and generate enthusiasm in others for a unique concept

The following qualifications will be a significant bonus:

- Ability to reach out to an existing relationship network in the Central Valley
- Ability to speak a language widely used in the Central Valley in addition to English

The consultant must be able to travel extensively within the Central Valley.

Submission Requirements and Instructions

Proposals should include the following information:

- Individual or organization and contact information
- Description of experience in community or political organizing and how that experience will be relevant to this project
- Description of how the consultant would initiate the work identifying individuals to meet – including those they know and don't know
- Description of how the consultant has interacted with the First Amendment in a professional setting, if any
- Key personnel involved in this project including their roles and responsibilities; resumes/curriculum vitae; and experience working with diverse communities
- Three references, preferably from other clients or employers, who can speak to the contractor's ability to succeed in this type of relationship- and idea-building activity
- Capacity to execute this study within the desired timeframe (5-6 months)

¹ Although political organizing skills would be directly applicable to the contract work, this work is strictly nonpartisan and a suitable contractor must be able to work with individuals of all political persuasions.

- Cost proposal

Please direct inquiries to Trish Fisher at fisher@lapiana.org or (510) 601-9056.

Proposals should be sent electronically to Trish Fisher at fisher@lapiana.org by **6 pm on August 31, 2018.**

Tentative Selection Schedule

Please note: the proposed selection schedule is highly tentative and is subjective to revision.

- July 31: Issue RFP
- August 17: Questions via email or a request for a conversation received by CVF
- August 20 – 24: Responses to questions returned or conversations completed
- August 31: Proposals due
- September 10 – September 21: conduct interviews with finalists
- September 24 – October 5: Negotiate final scope of work and contract with finalist(s)
- October 12: Select and sign contract with Community Relationship Coordination contractor

Appendix A: First Amendment Initiative Synopsis

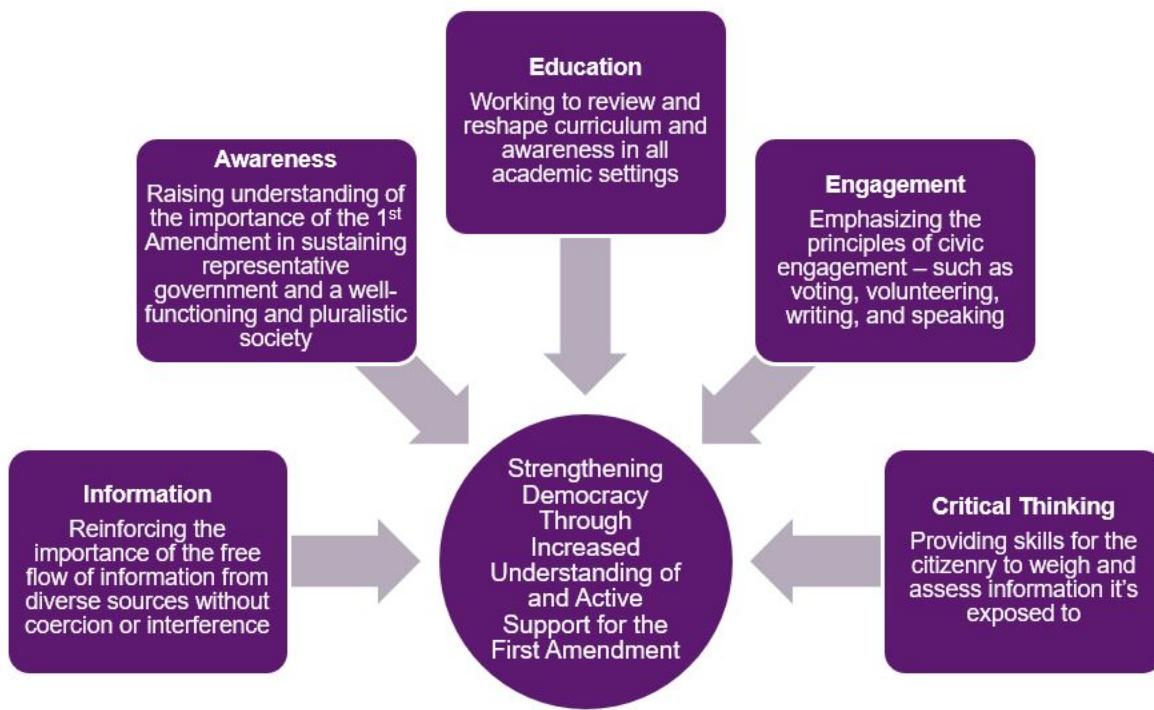
The overall purpose of CVF's First Amendment initiative will be:

To strengthen democracy through increased understanding of active support for the First Amendment.

CVF recognizes that different communities and organizations are addressing this broad goal through a variety of approaches that can be loosely summarized as:

- Engagement
- Education
- Awareness
- Information
- Critical thinking

Central Valley Foundation First Amendment Initiative



All of these approaches are valid and CVF may support work that falls under any one of these categories or that cuts across approaches.