

## Abstract

**Applicant Name:** County of San Mateo for San Mateo Workforce Investment Board

**Applicant Category:** Consortium of WIBs

**Lead Applicant City/State:** Belmont, CA

**Areas Served:** San Mateo County, Santa Clara County

**Project Name:** Silicon Valley ALLIES Innovation Initiative

**Funding Level Requested:** \$2,670,931 in technical costs and \$287,930 in evaluation costs

**Project Type:** A

**Description of Proposed Project:** Three local Workforce Investment Boards are forming a consortium to support a systematic and coordinated strategy across San Mateo and Santa Clara counties to build the workforce-related competencies of adult immigrants. The *work2future*, *NOVA*, and *San Mateo* WIBs are joining *ALLIES, the Alliance for Language Learners' Integration, Education, and Success*, to expand a network of educators, labor unions, businesses, and community-based organizations committed to best-practice alliances to accelerate immigrants' success in career and education. The Silicon Valley ALLIES Innovation Initiative aims to address a dual problem. First, due to high levels of recent immigration, the need for English language instruction for working age adults in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties far exceeds the available supply. Second, the service delivery system to meet the needs of adult English language learners is highly decentralized and lacks the common goals, measurement systems, and coordinating structures that would maximize the collective efficiency and impact of a system serving over 20,000 students annually.

We believe that this is far more than a problem of English as a Second Language or career-technical training. It is about self-sufficiency for workforce participants, their families, and prosperity for our communities. It is about reframing education and training systems to incorporate occupationally-relevant English proficiency for a growing population of immigrants and their children in an era of shrinking public resources. Our regional workforce is 50% foreign born, and two-thirds of children have at least one immigrant parent, so it is about finding and advancing diverse talent to

keep our businesses relevant in a global world. It is a collective issue that needs a collective solution. We are that collective solution. Mirroring the diversity of the issue, our diverse network of educators, policy groups, government agencies, charities, religious organizations, and businesses has the leadership and assets to align our work for maximum impact on this complex issue. Individually, we are innovators and problem solvers – together, we are framers of the future.

The overarching goal of this project *is to connect workers requiring English-language acquisition, work readiness and career-technical training to high-need regional career pathways through a structured and coordinated multi-sector network across workforce development, education, business and labor, and support organizations.*

Our approach will apply the best practices of change management<sup>1</sup> – clarity of problem definition and vision, ownership and alignment of key leaders, ongoing use of performance data, and disciplined and structured follow-through – to the collective network of service providers. The goal is to maximize the cost-effectiveness of service delivery for a decentralized system in much the same way that mission focus, data-driven decision making and high degrees of engagement maximize return on investment of single businesses and organizations.

We posit that building a business-like collaborative infrastructure will improve outcomes for workforce participants and the regional economy by significantly improving system alignment around common goals, strategies, metrics and ongoing processes. We will use the *Collective Impact* model to build collaboration and measure impacts. Our structure includes a regional Steering Committee and three sub-regional collaboratives one in each of the WIB's service areas, comprised of workforce, education, business, labor, and community based organizations. We will build a learning community so that sub-regions can learn from each other and additional partners can learn about our process and launch their own collaboratives. If funded, our efforts will be entirely devoted to identifying and piloting innovations to improve the return on investment of *existing* resources as

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<sup>1</sup> John P. Kotter, "Leading Change" *On Change Management*, Harvard Business Review, 2011.

opposed to paying directly for core ESL or training services.

ALLIES began assessing the language barrier in 2009 when a number of Bay Area community college and adult school representatives held a series of exploratory meetings, sponsored by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF), to discuss the growing concern that current institutional relationships were not sufficient to address the high level of ESL, education, and training needs for the immigrant community. In 2010, SVCF awarded the first of two grants to ALLIES to explore a multi-sector approach to building better systems to address these needs. ALLIES joined forces in 2012 with the region's Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to optimize and better integrate our collective assets, cause systemic change, and find better ways to track and evaluate impact.

**Evaluation Strategy:** SV ALLIES intends to devote extensive resources to a sequence of developmental, formative and summative evaluation activities, including capturing and analyzing process, output and outcome data for both systems-building and participant activities, and developing a cost-benefit analysis to capture efficiencies and the value of positive outcomes for the system and participants. Our evaluation design consists of:

**Phase I: Launch and Technical Assistance** : a project launch meeting, identification of common measures and potential data sources, a full convening of the SV ALLIES partnership, development of a data collection plan. **Phase II: Pre-formative Evaluation:** intensive gathering of systems-building data: interviews, document review, focus groups, online surveys, site visits, regular reporting via phone call and written mini-reports, an annual convening, and technical support to sub-regional collaboratives. **Phase III: Formative Evaluation:** beginning to collect and analyze participant-level data as working groups implement strategies to address the stated problem. **Phase IV: Summative Evaluation:** impact analysis of both participant and systems-level outcomes, as well as a cost-benefit analysis.

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