

Lisa Driscoll

From: Nicole Gemmer <nsabgemmer@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 5, 2021 7:59 PM
To: Lisa Driscoll
Cc: Supervisor_Burgis; supervisor_andersen@bos.cccounty.us; supervisor_mitchoff@bos.cccounty.us; supervisor_glover@bos.cccounty.us; supervisor_gioia@bos.cccounty.us
Subject: Measure X Funding Proposal For Additional Programs - Contra Costa Library Foundation

Dear Ms. Driscoll,

The following proposal is in regard to the CCC Finance Committee meeting agenda item 5 for the December 6, 2021 meeting. We will be making this proposal as part of the public comment on this item, but I wanted to provide it in writing as well.

The Contra Costa county library system has always done more with less. Its funding is vastly disproportionate to the scale of need and lags far behind other Bay Area counties per capita. Contra Costa is as much characterized by its pockets of immense wealth as it is by its areas of deprivation. The library system serves *all members* of this diverse population, but, given its current funding structure, it cannot do so in equitable measure to all residents and communities.

The Contra Costa Library Foundation is a “step-up” initiative whose seeds were sown when the library commission itemized extensive countywide disparities in a 2016 report, disparities that have only intensified since the report’s publication and, especially, since the pandemic. The foundation’s seeds have since grown, and we are now asking the **county** to **step up** to help us close the equity gap and build an organizational framework for more robust library support. We are requesting \$300,000 to cover start-up costs to establish the foundation and to provide the capacity to obtain additional funding for library programs and services.

The goal of the Contra Costa Library Foundation is to secure additional funding for the library system and to act as a catalyst to execute the library’s strategic priorities. Through foundation funding, we hope to 1) address opportunity and equity gaps in services, programs, and facilities, and (2) provide money for services that will benefit the entirety of the county’s residents that cannot be attained through existing funding sources. The foundation will work closely with library administration to solicit support for library funding priorities and will seek opportunities for coordination, potential collaboration, and organizational development with our local library foundations and friends groups. The foundation’s initial priorities include funding for electronic resources that can be used by all county residents, lendable technology to access those resources, and capital projects in impacted communities based on the guidance and goals of the library.

Over the past year, the foundation’s organizing committee has conducted outreach to numerous community stakeholders and library foundations outside of Contra Costa County; consolidated its mission, objectives, and strategic plan; and coordinated efforts with county library administration to ensure that funding will be allocated responsibly and strategically in alignment with the county library’s targets and community needs.

The seed money requested would be utilized to support the following aspects of the foundation’s start-up operations:

- Identification of and agreement with fiscal sponsor

- Enlistment of professional legal and financial expertise to assist with creating the fiscal and organizational structure of the foundation and registering the foundation as a CA 501(c)(3) organization
- Board recruitment and development
- Digital branding, website design and hosting, and marketing efforts
- Continued outreach to branch libraries, friends and foundation groups, and externally, to the broader philanthropic community and civic organizations to identify partnerships, needs, and priorities
- Employment of a contract-based part-time executive director and coverage for expenses related to virtual office equipment and other needs
- Definition and implementation of programs to fulfill our mission to benefit county libraries, which may include, for example:
 - a CCC branch/community library foundation affiliates program
 - funding for the purchase of technology/software to benefit all patrons
 - capital projects for developing branch libraries

An investment in the Contra Costa Library Foundation is an investment in the future of our county and the equitable provision of library services for all county residents. We are **the only** county library system in the Bay Area without a county-wide foundation. Measure X funding offers a unique opportunity for the county to spearhead the development of the Contra Costa Library Foundation, and its support will be multiplied many times over and yield significant dividends to our community.

The county's commitment would signal the Board of Supervisors' endorsement of the creation of a Contra Costa Library Foundation, and in so doing would provide a powerful lever to attract strong board leadership **and** private funds for ongoing support and program development. **Please step up** to help us launch and leverage this foundation that will afford tremendous opportunity and future resources for county residents.

Please let me know if there are questions or additional information needed regarding this proposal. On behalf of myself and my committee members, I appreciate your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,
 Nicole Gemmer
 Chair, Contra Costa Library Foundation Organizing Committee
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 925-324-5532

Committee Members:
 Kathleen Gilcrest
 Susan Hildreth
 Alison Mckee
 Rachel Rosekind
 Peter Wilson

cc:
 Contra Costa County Supervisors