STOCKTON ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT DEMONSTRATION (SEED)
Request for Letters of Intent
Research Strategies to Explore the Potential Impact
of Unconditional Cash Transfers in Stockton, California

DEADLINE FOR LETTER OF INTENT: February 9, 2018 -- 11:59 PM PST

Purpose

Mayor Michael Tubbs of Stockton, California announced a groundbreaking new effort to explore how a guaranteed basic income can help empower citizens struggling in the modern economy to build a better future for themselves and their families. The Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED) is the nation’s first-ever municipal level pilot program that will evaluate how an income floor can improve the economic security and well-being of city residents.

SEED is seeking an academic research partner to identify, design, and execute a research agenda that explores the potential impact of a guaranteed income.

Background

For nearly four decades, working people in America have weathered a steady decline in both their wages and quality of life. From stagnant wages for middle- and low-income workers to rising inequality between those on the lower end of the economic spectrum and the richest Americans, working families have witnessed a downward spiral in good-paying jobs that can support a family, fewer and fewer health and workplace benefits, and the disappearing dream of a retirement with dignity. The national poverty rate has hovered around 13.5 percent, with millions living in “deep poverty” with a household income below 50 percent of the federal poverty threshold. 53% of Americans don’t have $400 in case of an emergency.

The SEED project puts Stockton on the cutting edge of addressing some of the nation’s most pressing economic challenges. While basic income experiments are underway worldwide, Stockton will be home to the first public/private pilot in the United States with significant leadership from a public official and an emphasis on community engagement. This demonstration, and its accompanying study, are intended to complement and extend the findings from causal experiments that are taking place in the US and abroad.

SEED is interested in collaborating with independent academic research partners that:

● Introduce research questions that complement and/or builds on existing research on unconditional cash transfers in the United States;
● Value community engagement and participatory methodologies;
• Promote co-learning and capacity building of all partners; and
• Involve community and city partners in all aspects of the research process.

Terms of Eligibility Criteria

The following terms apply:

1. Letters of intent must be submitted by an academic partner affiliated with an academic institution or a research institution with an established relationship with an academic partner. Academic partners are defined as research professor, research scientist, and/or tenure track faculty.

2. Once selected, the academic partner must commit to the full length of the demonstration. The length will be determined by research design, but is expected to be a minimum of 18 months and maximum of 36 months.

3. Applicants must submit proposals that reflect the SEED’s specific parameters as described in Timeline and Additional Details and follow the instructions as described in Letter of Intent Instructions to be considered.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by academics established in the field of unconditional cash transfers research and community partners embedded in the city of Stockton. Proposals will be evaluated on several factors, including:

• Strength of core research question(s) and quality of the proposed design and methodology;
• Academic partner’s credentials that position them to effectively execute the proposed research design and methodology;
• Feasibility of completion of the proposed study given size and focus of SEED;
• Degree to which proposal builds on existing research in exploratory and innovative ways, which may include coupling qualitative methods with analysis of nation-wide trends, ethnographic observation, or community-based participatory research;
• Relevance of proposed research effort to the community’s demographic and economic realities;
• Degree to which study builds on existing knowledge and open questions about the impact of unconditional and conditional cash transfers in the United States; and
• Willingness to collaborate with other research teams in multiple disciplines working domestically and internationally on cash transfer interventions.

Timeline and Additional Details

Timeline:

• February 9, 2018: Letters of Intent due
• February 23, 2018: Full proposal invitations sent
• March 23, 2018: Full proposals due
• April 6, 2018: Notification of selection
• Fall 2018: Start of disbursements
SEED is committed to working with the selected research partner to determine the design, size, and length of disbursements based on proposed research design and available resources. As the first municipal-level basic income pilot, **SEED is most interested in exploratory research designs that prioritize a core question or area of focus to complement full-scale pilots underway in other parts of the country and world.** For example, applicants can propose research that explores changes in familial or community dynamics, labor participation, health, education, and behavioral outcomes, observations on consumption, differences in framing narratives for use of the benefit, etc.

SEED encourages research designs that require up to $500,000 in financial support. Do not include the cost of cash disbursements in your total budget. Please note that the pilot is currently positioned to support up to 100 recipients. Applicants should design their proposals to reflect that number of recipients, but take into consideration with their design the possibility for scale or replication in the event of budget growth.

**Letter of Intent Instructions**

The first step in the process is the letter of intent. Applicants should submit their letter of intent via email to stocktondemonstration@gmail.com. The letter of intent must be received by 11:59 PM Pacific Standard time on Thursday, February 9, 2018. Please limit the letter to no more than three pages plus a cover sheet and curriculum vitae for all academic researchers submitted as one PDF file. The letter should include:

1. A cover sheet with:
   a. The title of the proposed research;
   b. The lead academic partner(s) and their affiliated organization, mailing address, email address, and phone number along with any other proposed collaborators;
   c. Anticipated need for grant funds and/or other forms of support;
   d. The primary research question the academic partner would like to propose to SEED and why it is the most important question to ask in the context of the current research and issue landscape.
2. A paragraph outlining your interest in SEED and why you’re positioned to contribute to the knowledge base on unconditional and conditional cash transfer interventions;
3. 1-2 page overview of your proposed research design and methodology, explaining specific aims, data and methods, and significance towards the current research base. Please indicate how the cash disbursement program will need to be designed to achieve the research objective.
4. A paragraph or graph roughly explaining expected financial costs

**Contact Information**

For additional information, visit stocktondemonstration.org.

Direct questions to: stocktondemonstration@gmail.com.