



**NATIONAL STRING PROJECT CONSORTIUM**

INFORMATION

AND

APPLICATION PACKET

(Application Deadline: November 17, 2009)

(revised April, 2009)

Thank you for your interest in the National String Project Consortium (NSPC) and our commitment to help in the creation of new String Projects around the country.

One of the critical issues facing the public schools today is the shortage of well-qualified teachers. This issue is particularly significant in the area of string education. As public schools across the country attempt to build and maintain their music programs, numerous jobs for string teachers go unfilled due to a lack of qualified professionals. School districts throughout the country are being compelled to hire teachers who are unprepared to teach strings in the public schools, with the result that children are poorly taught and school orchestra programs become substandard. Part of the problem stems from the fact that most colleges and music schools have traditionally supported string students who wish to become performance majors and have not done enough to encourage string students to become music education majors.

The NSPC is attempting to address this shortage of qualified string teachers with a plan that has established teacher-training programs at universities throughout the country. These “String Projects” are

- helping to alleviate the string teacher shortage
- encouraging string players to become string teachers
- providing financial incentives by offering assistantships to undergraduate string education majors
- offering supervised teaching experience for college students
- providing the opportunity for children to study string instruments
- helping stimulate the growth of new public school orchestra programs around the country.

In this packet you will find information about the grant program, detailed information about the model on which this is based, and an application form which you can use to apply for participation in this Consortium. Please send your completed application to: National String Project

Consortium, c/o Robert Jesselson, School of Music, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208. The deadline for this round of grants is November 17, 2009.

If you would like more information, I can be contacted at 803-777-2033 or by emailing at <RJesselson@Mozart.sc.edu>. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely yours  
Dr. Robert Jesselson

# National String Project Consortium

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## National String Project Consortium

### Part I: Description

#### A. Background

According to research by Dr. Robert Gillespie (Ohio State University), the number of string students in the public schools increased by 79% between 1991 and 1995. Unfortunately there has not been a similar increase in the number of string and orchestra teachers. According to Dr. James Kjelland (Northwestern University) in *American String Teacher*, Spring 1996 "The shortage of string teachers is a major topic of concern today, and the long-term solution would be to recruit more string education majors to our colleges."

In the article "Wanted Nationwide: Qualified String Teachers" (Notes, Autumn, 1996), Mary Wagner, current ASTA president, wrote that "states such as Arizona, Texas, and Virginia could not fill the positions they had open this past year by the first day of school.....The population of string teachers is aging and the number of new string education graduates does not meet current demands."

A key component to the success of public school programs is the existence of universities and music schools with a strong commitment to the training of string teachers. There must be cooperative university-public school partnerships to train qualified teachers and to provide these teachers with the support services they need to be effective. Universities have not always understood their role in this relationship, and must be strongly encouraged to foster the training of competent string teachers as well as fine performers. Too often universities have paid lip service to the idea of educating quality string teachers. Few universities have the necessary methods courses needed to prepare students adequately for teaching. Fewer have string education specialists. And although most colleges give scholarships to performance majors, almost none offer stipends specifically targeted for string students who want to major in music education. This sends the wrong message to people about the need for qualified teachers. The National String Project Consortium grant program will address that problem by providing assistantship money to music education majors.

## B. Definition

According to Greg Hurley in his article on string projects in the November 1998 edition of American String Teacher journal, the “guiding principle.... of a string project is to provide college string majors with teaching experiences while providing pedagogy classes or supervision over a number of semesters in order to prepare the college students for private or public school teaching while promoting the talents of precollege string students.”

The model for this proposal is the USC String Project at the University of South Carolina. This program, now in its 35th year, has 31 undergraduate students as teachers, and about 330 children (beginning in the 3rd grade) studying string instruments. With this practical hands-on training during their college years, the undergraduates who teach in the program gain valuable experience prior to taking a job. It also attracts string players to the teaching profession by providing them with the opportunity to teach under supervision. In addition, music education majors discover whether they enjoy teaching by doing it; those that discover that they do not want to make it their career may decide to change their majors before getting their first job.

## C. Proposal

This proposal envisions the creation of up to ten more String Projects which will be centers of excellence in the training of string teachers around the country. Each center will receive up to 5 years of grant support from the NSPC, to be matched each year by \$10,000 from the host college. The grant money would be reduced over the 5-year period in order to encourage the String Project to increase its number of students in order to become self-sufficient. The university’s match may include the income from the fees charged for the lessons and classes, and it may include in-kind expenses such as secretarial help for running the program. The grant money would help pay for a Master Teacher and for assistantships for the undergraduate students who are the actual teachers. The institution will be responsible for providing the necessary string faculty to teach violin, viola, cello and bass as well as music education faculty to teach methods courses, technique courses and string

pedagogy. The colleges will also be expected to provide the space for the Project's classes and lessons.

Selection as a new site in the NSPC does not “guarantee” availability of grant money. Once the sites are selected then we begin the process of applying for grant money from foundations and corporations.

The colleges/universities are chosen through a competitive selection process. Consideration will be given to the following issues: size of community, potential for young students in the program, necessary facilities, required faculty and courses, financial commitment for ten years, presence of a potential Master Teacher (a well-respected, experienced string teacher who has taught in the public schools), among others.

#### D. Consortium

The National String Project Consortium (NSPC) is a coalition of String Project sites at universities, in association with businesses, professional music organizations, and individuals who support our goals. The NSPC is dedicated to increasing the number of children playing stringed instruments, and addressing the critical shortage of string teachers in the US.

The National String Project Consortium is a loose association of String Projects. They interact, exchange ideas and learn from each other, but each String Project operates completely independently. Each college or university that is chosen to participate in the Consortium will be responsible for its own program.

The Consortium was originally formed in 1998 under the auspices of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA). It is now an independent non-profit organization working together with ASTA and other music organizations to serve string education and string development across the United States

Since its inception the NSPC has been responsible for the stringed instrument education of well over 7,500 children of public school age in 35 sites around the United States. The NSPC's teacher training program has reached over 500 String Music Education students in the sponsoring

colleges and universities, and assisted with the education of over 200 new teachers public school teachers in the past five years.

The National String Project Consortium has earned national and international recognition, with articles in the *New York Times* and other national media.. Recently the NSPC was included in the Dana Foundation book, just released, called "*Transforming Arts Teaching: The Role of Higher Education*". The NSPC is profiled as one of 24 "best practices" in higher-education. To see the document, please go to:

<http://www.dana.org/news/publications/publication.aspx?id=10158>

The NSPC is actively involved in seeking grants and gifts to assist the current String Project sites in continuing to provide high quality education and training, and also help provide start up assistance to those institutions seeking to create new sites. Since 1999, the NSPC has received grants totaling about \$2.7 million from FIPSE (US Department of Education), the NEA, Knight Foundation, Dana Foundation, Psaras Foundation, Heller Foundation, D'Addario Foundation, NABIM, NAMM, Music Lives Foundation, and from Strings Magazine.

#### E. Basic Proposal Requirements

Because this is considered a "dissemination program" based on the success of a proven model, several key elements must be part of your proposal for this grant. Although the specific design of each String Project may vary from program to program, the following requirements must be part of any proposal:

- the children who are students in the String Project must enter the program through the heterogeneous beginning class. Since this program is intended to prepare teachers for public school jobs, the emphasis is on the large heterogeneous and homogeneous classes and the orchestras
  - the grant funding pays for undergraduate string assistantships or stipends in order to attract students to the profession of string teaching
  - the program takes place at the college or university, after school hours
  - the program utilizes a Master Teacher with public school teaching experience

- the children who are students in the String Project participate in their own school programs. The String Project must be viewed as a supplement to the public school program, not as competition.
- the children can continue in the program from year to year; however, once they withdraw or are “dropped” they can not re-enter. This rule maintains the integrity of the program.
- the program is not part of the regular college curriculum, but rather serves to supplement the university coursework
- the program charges very low fees to students in order to ensure the necessary numbers of students and in order to allow participation by low income students
- each university site will be required to commit at least \$10,000 yearly towards this program until it is able to be financially self-sufficient.

#### F. Site Requirements:

Main considerations for site selection include:

- size of community (large enough to attract a pool of pre-college students - eventually up to at least 140 children)
- proximity of town/city to campus (easy access to the school by the community)
- necessary facilities at the college (2-3 large rooms for heterogeneous classes of 20-30 children; several smaller rooms for homogeneous classes of 10 children; space for private lessons)
- college faculty and courses (music education, violin, viola, cello and bass faculty)
- availability of a potential Master Teacher in the area (one with significant public school experience)
- college students who are teaching in the program will be evaluated regularly by supervising teachers, including the Master Teacher
- financial commitment of at least \$10,000 per year by the university
- support for the proposal by local school districts and string teachers - they must understand that this proposal will supplement rather than compete with existing school programs
- states/regions that do not currently have strong music education string programs might be considered well-suited for such a program.

The Master Teacher should be an experienced local public school string teacher who knows how to teach strings in heterogeneous groups. The time commitment will be about four hours per week. The Master Teacher will teach one class (twice weekly) as a model, and will observe and supervise the college undergraduates who teach their own classes.

The String Project should have a Director who is a faculty or staff member of the college music school. This person will be in charge of organizing the program, setting policy, and supervising the young teachers. The Director is not necessarily a music education specialist; however, it should be someone who has good organizational skills and who is interested in promoting the development of string teachers.

#### G. Setting up a String Project

This plan envisions the following possible scenario for each site:

- year 1: hire Master Teacher and 6 undergraduate students as teachers; recruit in local schools; have 2 classes of 15 youngsters each; total of 30 children in program (all beginning students).
- year 2: Master Teacher plus 7 undergraduate student teachers; have 2 beginning classes plus second year classes; have 1 small orchestra of second year students; total of 65 children in program (40 new beginning students and 25 second year students).
- year 3: Master Teacher plus 8 student teachers; have 2 beginning classes, plus second year classes, plus private lessons and orchestra; total of 95 children in program (45 new beginning students, 30 second year students and 20 third year students).
- year 4: Master Teacher plus 9 student teachers; have 3 beginning classes, plus second year classes, plus lessons, plus 2 orchestras; total of 115 children in program (55 new beginning students, 30 second year students, and 20 third and 10 fourth year students).
- year 5: Master Teacher plus 10 student teachers; have 3 beginning classes, plus second year classes, plus lessons, plus 2 orchestras; total of 140 children in program (60 new beginning students, 40 second year students, and 25 third, 10 fourth year students, and 5 fifth year students).

year 6: Master Teacher plus 10 student teachers; have 3 beginning classes, plus second year classes, lessons, plus 2 orchestras; total of 148 children in program (60 new beginning students, 40 second year students, 30 third year students, 12 fourth year students, 5 fifth year students, and 1 sixth year student).

At this point, each institution would decide whether to continue the program at this level, or to increase the number of undergraduate students and children in order to make it larger and more effective.

A multi-year commitment is needed in order to fully develop the programs and to establish these centers as a permanent part of the university's mission to the community.

Success in this project will be measured in terms of the number and quality of the teachers who are being trained in the programs, the number of program graduates who then accept full-time employment as string teachers, as well as the number of children who are studying through the programs. It is hoped that these ten String Projects will themselves become models for others so that every state will ultimately have at least one such program in order to train teachers and fully staff string programs in all the schools.

#### H. Projected Budget

The following sample budgets for the first six years of a String Project give projected income and expenses for the program. However, each site may determine its own budget, based on local considerations. These sample budgets, based on the model at USC, employ the following assumptions:

- the undergraduate students who are teaching in the String Projects will receive stipends of \$1600 per year for what is considered to be a ten hour work-week. (Although the students actually work only six hours per week, they are given credit for time spent recruiting, organizing their student recitals, doing paperwork, etc. See explanation under Model).

- the number of students in the program is based on the estimates given in the previous section on “Setting up a String Project”.
- fees charged are calculated on the following basis:
  - First-year students: \$35 per semester
  - Second-year students: \$45 per semester
  - Third-year students: \$55 per semester
  - Fourth-year students: \$65 per semester
  - Fifth-year students: \$75 per semester
  - Sixth-year students: \$75 per semester
- the university’s financial commitment (\$10,000) may include in-kind costs, such as the secretarial fees, etc. It may include the Master Teacher if the Director and Master Teacher are the same person.

Year I:

Expenses:

6 undergraduate students @ \$1600 per student	=	\$9,600.
Master Teacher (for four hours/week)	=	3,500.
Start-up Expenses (music, stands, chairs, publicity, secretary fees)	=	<u>9,000.</u>
		\$22,100.

Income:

Grant	=	\$10,000.
30 children participating @ \$35/semester	=	2,100.
University funding	=	<u>10,000.</u>
		\$22,100.

Year 2:

Expenses:

7 undergraduate students @ \$1600 per student	=	\$11,200.
Master Teacher (for four hours/week)	=	3,500.
Continuing Expenses (music, publicity, secretary fees)	=	<u>7,000.</u>
		\$21,700

Income:

Grant	=	\$6,650.
40 children participating @ \$35/semester	=	2,800.
25 children participating @ \$45/semester	=	2,250.
University funding	=	<u>10,000.</u>
		\$21,700.

Year 3:

Expenses:

8 undergraduate students @ \$1600 per student	=	\$12,800.
Master Teacher (for four hours/week)	=	3,500.
Continuing Expenses (music, publicity, secretary fees)	=	<u>6,000.</u>
		\$22,300.

Income:

Grant	=	\$4,250.
45 children participating @ \$35/semester	=	3,150.
30 children participating @ \$45/semester	=	2,700.
20 children participating @ \$55/semester	=	2,200.
University funding	=	<u>10,000.</u>
		\$22,300.

Year 4:

Expenses:

9 undergraduate students @ \$1600 per student	=	\$14,400.
Master Teacher (for four hours/week)	=	3,500.
Continuing Expenses (publicity, secretary fees)	=	<u>5,000.</u>
		\$22,900.

Income:

Grant	=	\$2,650.
55 children participating @ \$35/semester	=	3,850.
30 children participating @ \$45/semester	=	2,700.
20 children participating @ \$55/semester	=	2,200.
10 children participating @ \$65/semester	=	1,300.
Outside Local support	=	200.
University funding	=	<u>10,000.</u>
		\$22,900.

Year 5:

Expenses:

10 undergraduate students @ \$1600 per	
student	= \$16,000.
Master Teacher (for four hours/week)	= 3,500.
Continuing Expenses (publicity, secretary fees)	= <u>5,000.</u>
	\$24,500.

Income:

Grant	= \$1,100.
60 children participating @ \$35/semeste	= 4,200.
40 children participating @ \$45/semester	= 3,600.
25 children participating @ \$55/semester	= 2,750.
10 children participating @ \$65/semester	= 1,300.
5 children participating @ \$75/semester	= 750.
Outside Local support	= 800.
University funding	= <u>10,000.</u>
	\$24,500.

Year 6:

Expenses:

10 undergraduate students @ \$1600 per	
student	= \$16,000.
Master Teacher (for four hours/week)	= 3,500.
Continuing Expenses (publicity, secretary fees)	= <u>5,000.</u>
	\$24,500.

Income:

Grant	= \$0.
60 children participating @ \$35/semeste	= 4,200.
40 children participating @ \$45/semester	= 3,600.
30 children participating @ \$55/semester	= 3,300.
12 children participating @ \$65/semester	= 1,560.
5 children participating @ \$75/semester	= 750.
1 child participating @ \$75/semester	= 150.
Outside Local support	= 940.
University funding	= <u>10,000.</u>
	\$24,500.

## Part II: The Model

This proposal builds on the experience and success of the String Project at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina. In a city which had few cultural opportunities and no history of string playing, the university created a program 32 years ago which trained teachers, nurtured young students, engendered the creation of public school programs in the area, and fostered a university-public school partnership. The results have worked to the advantage of all, including the students, the university, public schools, the local symphony, and the general cultural climate.

The USC String Project provides practical hands-on training for undergraduate string education majors during their four or five years of college. The program consists of three orchestras, four large heterogeneous beginning classes, small homogeneous second year classes, private lessons, chamber music, theory classes, and a Suzuki program, all taught by undergraduate students under the supervision of a Master Teacher, a Graduate Assistant and the Director of the String Project. The students begin in the third or fourth grade. They can continue in the program through the twelfth grade, as long as they participate in their own school programs and play in the Youth Orchestras. There are currently 351 students and 28 undergraduate teachers in the program.

An important aspect of the String Project is that the participants are charged very low fees in order to enable economically disadvantaged children to enroll. As a result of the low fees, the USC String Project has a large number of poor and minority students (approximately 40%). A large number of minority teachers have also come through the program. This has also had a major impact on the community and has altered the "elitist" image of string players.

### A. The Teachers: Undergraduate String Education Majors

The teachers in the program are all undergraduate string education majors. However the String Project is not part of the regular

undergraduate curriculum; instead freshmen are accepted into the program and given an "assistantship" which is paid monthly. If they violate any of the rules (i.e. they are late or absent, or if they neglect to fulfill an obligation) their pay is docked. The assistantship stipend is used as a recruiting device, and to encourage students to consider majoring in education.

The university students study their own major instruments, secondary stringed instruments, and take pedagogical methods and technique courses, in addition to the standard undergraduate music education courses. The String Project teachers also attend a weekly organization and pedagogy meeting. They actively participate in all the activities of a professional teacher: recruiting students, planning lessons, writing report cards, keeping records, conducting orchestras, teaching beginning classes, teaching smaller homogeneous second-year classes, coaching chamber music, teaching private lessons, setting up rehearsals, organizing recitals, etc. Therefore, by the time they graduate, these students have had four or five years of practical training and experience and are ready to begin teaching on their own. One of the additional benefits of having college students beginning to teach early in their careers is that they discover whether they really want to teach; those that do not usually change their majors prior to their student teaching experience in their senior year (or often even after they have their first job!).

The full-time student teachers in the program work for 6 hours/week, although their load is considered to be 10 hours/week. The additional hours are calculated to include time spent in the beginning of the semester in recruiting, and at the end of the semester in putting together studio recitals, the large ensemble concert and doing paperwork. Full-time student teachers receive \$1600 per year, or over \$9.00 per hour for their teaching. First-year teachers usually work half-time while they are becoming acquainted with the program, so that they are not overloaded during their freshman year at college. They receive \$800 per year, working for 3 hours/week (although their load is similarly calculated as 5 hours/week).

During their first year in the program, Freshman university students observe various aspects of the program. They help with the recruiting, are "assistants" in the large beginning classes and the second year classes, and participate as coaches for the various orchestras. After the first year,

they are assigned to teach private lessons and other activities depending on their interest, ability and maturity. By the time they graduate, they will have been able to teach in a variety of pedagogical settings.

The Master Teacher is a part-time instructor who has taught in the public schools for many years. By teaching one of the heterogeneous classes she is the model for the young teachers. She also observes and critiques the classes which the college undergraduates teach.

For many years, the Director of the USC String Project was an applied faculty member at the School of Music. However, as a result of the enormous growth of the program a new position was finally created at the university for a music education string specialist. This step was a direct result of the success of the program and the need for a faculty member to address the specific requirements of music education students.

## B. The Program

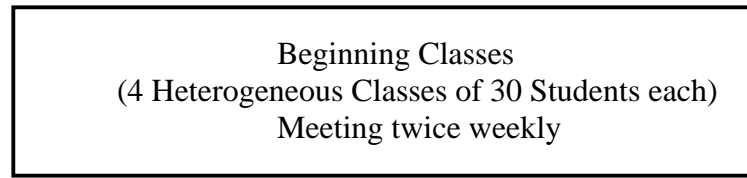
Children in the third and fourth grades are recruited from local public and private schools to study in the String Project. The teachers go to about twenty schools each August and play short demonstration programs for the children. In addition, local newspapers print informational articles, and letters are sent to area principals to inform them about the opportunity for youngsters to join. People who are interested in the program are invited to come to an information and registration meeting held at the university. Each year about 120 students are selected for the four heterogeneous beginning classes (violin, viola, cello and bass taught together). These classes meet twice a week (Tuesdays and Fridays). The first class (4:00-5:00) is taught by the Master Teacher. The teachers of the other three classes observe the first class, and then subsequently teach their own classes during the next hour (5:00-6:00). At the end of each semester all the students in the program participate in a concert in the Koger Performing Arts Center.

Students in the second year of the program attend once a week for an hour class with like-instruments (homogeneous classes). They also come on Sundays for the Intermediate Orchestra. After the second year, students come for a private half-hour lesson once a week. They also are required to play in the Advanced Orchestra. All students in the program

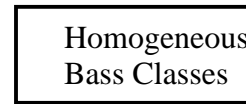
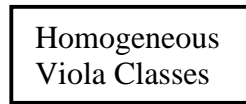
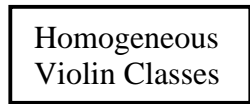
are expected to play in an orchestra (either one of the three String Project orchestras or one of the Youth Orchestras run by the SC Philharmonic Orchestra). They are also expected to participate in their own school programs in order to be in the String Project. (See Organizational Plan, page 15)

# ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN USC String Project

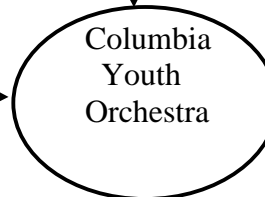
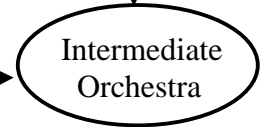
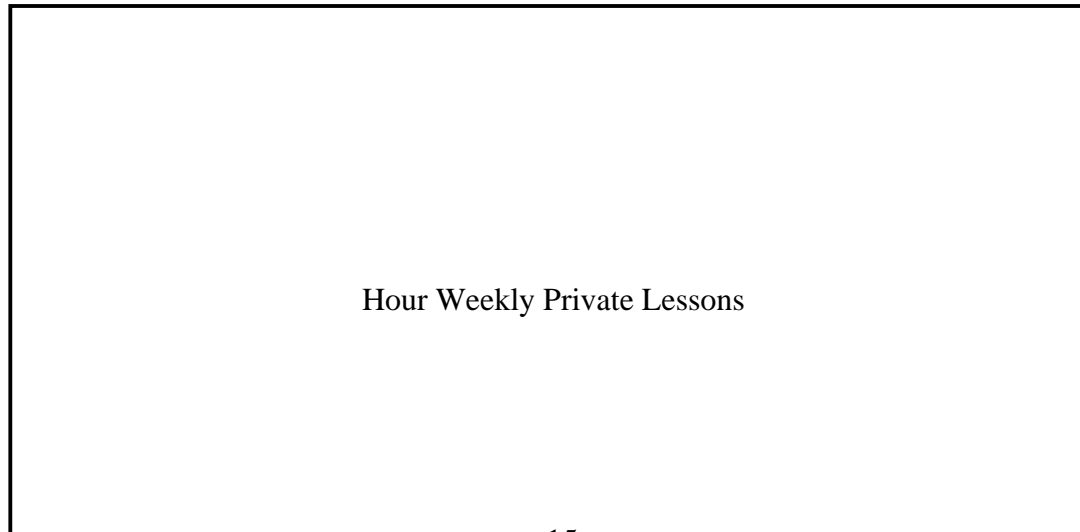
**First Year**



**Second Year**



**Third Through Twelfth Year**



### C. Success of the Program

The USC String Project has won national recognition, including the Verner Award and a documentary on South Carolina ETV celebrating the 20th anniversary of the program.

When the University of South Carolina String Project was founded in 1974 there was just one small string program in the Columbia metropolitan area. Now all five school districts in the Columbia area have large and active string programs, with orchestras in every high school and six regional youth orchestras. The USC String Project has had a major impact in a city with no previous tradition for orchestral music in the schools and little interest in the arts. Initially the program provided competent young teachers and well-trained string students. Eventually the large numbers of children playing string instruments created a critical mass and the parents demanded programs in their own local schools.

According to an article on the program in the Journal of Research on Music Education "The String Project appears to have filled a void where school strings programs do not exist, or functioned to supplement strings instruction available in the schools.... Perhaps this model ... could be used in other settings, under different financial arrangements, and be a useful protocol for teacher training in band, choral, and general music settings."

Part III: Application for String Project Grant

Institution (College/University/School of Music):

Chair/Director/Dean:

Contact Person for this Project:

Position at College/University:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Fax Number:

E-mail address:

How will the String Project fit in with the mission of your school?

How will the String Project enhance the string education program already in place at your school?

Does your school have an existing pre-college string program? How would this program be affected by a String Project?

Please list your string faculty, indicating ranks and whether they are part-time or full-time.

Will the college faculty support this venture? How?

Are there currently string programs in the schools in your area? How will the public school teachers react to this venture? Please include letters of support from local school string teachers and/or superintendents, if string programs exist.

If the Consortium fails to get funded on a national level, will you pursue this String Project concept at your school with other funds?

Will you be able to apply for funding from local foundations in your area? Please identify potential foundation support in your area.

Are there corporations which have factories or headquarters in your area, and which may be interested in a national proposal which includes your site? Please list them so that we can apply as part of the Consortium.

In what ways would you plan on adapting or changing the USC model to fit your local considerations? (Please note the Basic Proposal Requirements on Page 4, and indicate that your proposal will follow these stipulations.)

**BUDGET:** If you plan on using budget figures which are different from those included in the sample budgets contained in this packet, please provide projected budgets for four years. Include your criteria (amount for undergraduate assistantships, master teacher, fees, etc.)

Please address each of the following criteria regarding your site and comment on how you would fulfill the requirement or objective.

- size of community must be large enough to attract a large pool of students

Comment:

What is the total population of your metropolitan area?

- proximity of town/city to campus: there should be easy access to the school by the community

Comment:

- necessary facilities at the college/university (2-3 large rooms for heterogeneous classes 20-30 children; several smaller rooms for homogeneous classes of 10 children, space for private lessons)

Comment:

- college faculty and courses (music education, violin, viola, cello and bass faculty)

Comment:

- presence of a potential Master Teacher in the area (one with significant public school experience). Has this teacher indicated a willingness to participate?

Comment:

- college students who are teaching in the program will be evaluated regularly by supervising teachers, including the Master Teacher. Who will supervise the young teachers?

Comment:

- Who will serve as Director of the String Project? (give name and title).

- financial commitment by the institution (\$10,000 per year) (grant money is to be used to pay for assistantships to music education string students and for the Master Teacher; the university's match can include in-kind expenses)

Comment:

- support for the proposal by local school districts and string teachers - they must understand that this proposal will supplement rather than compete with existing school programs

Comment:

- states/regions that do not currently have strong music education string programs might be considered well-suited for such a program

Comment:

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Signature of Chair/Director/Dean

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Date

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Signature of Contact Person

Send an electronic copy to [RJesselson@Mozart.sc.edu](mailto:RJesselson@Mozart.sc.edu) and a hard, signed copy to: National String Project Consortium, c/o Dr. Robert Jesselson, School of Music, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208

Application Fee: \$50 Please make payable to National String Project Consortium

Deadline: November 17, 2009