



2016 Grant Competition – SIF Overview Webinar Transcript

This document is a transcript of a webinar covering the 2016 Social Innovation Fund Notice of Federal Funding Availability (NOFA). It has been very lightly edited for print, and is presented in a conversational, rather than a formal tone. For official guidance. Please see the NOFA.

Social Innovation Fund (SIF) Classic
2016 Grant Competition - SIF Overview

Partnership for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

AmeriCorps | Senior Corps | Social Innovation Fund | Volunteer Generation Fund

Hello and welcome to the 2016 Social Innovation Fund Classic Grant Competition Overview presentation. We appreciate your interest in the Social Innovation Fund, otherwise known as the SIF.

PRESENTER

Lois Nembhard
Deputy Director
Social Innovation Fund

Partnership for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

Social Innovation Fund

My name is Lois Nembhard, and I am the deputy director of the Social Innovation Fund.

My intent today is to provide you with information on the SIF, to help you determine if this is the right opportunity for your organization. If it is, then I encourage you to participate in the webinar that will go into the details of the grant competition.

It's important to note that in addition to participating in our webinars, you must read the NOFA and application instructions in order to have all the information necessary to submit a competitive grant application.

Purpose of this Webinar

1. Provide an overview of the SIF and its requirements
2. Help you determine if this is the right opportunity for your organization or your constituents

Note: We will be summarizing requirements; you must read the NOFA and the application instructions for detailed instructions

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About the Corporation for National & Community Service

- Independent federal agency
- Dedicated to improving lives and strengthening communities by fostering civic engagement through service and volunteering, and identifying and scaling effective solutions to community challenges
- The nation's largest grantmaker in support of service and volunteering; engages more than five million Americans annually in service to their communities through programs such as Senior Corps and AmeriCorps

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The Corporation for National and Community Service, CNCS, is an independent federal agency, meaning that we are funded directly by Congress and don't fall under one of the larger federal agencies.

We are the national's largest service and volunteering grantmaker and fund the AmeriCorps grant program, AmeriCorps VISTA and Senior Corps.

The Social Innovation Fund was created in 2009 when the Corporation for National and Community Service was reauthorized with bipartisan support.

With the addition of the Social Innovation Fund, CNCS has expanded its traditional activities to include a focus on identifying and growing innovative, evidence-based approaches to our nation’s challenges.

Our purpose is simply stated on this slide: Using federal investment to attract private resources to grow the impact of effective solutions to community challenges in order to improve the lives of people living in low-income, under-resourced communities.

Why the SIF?

“The bottom line is clear: **solutions to America’s challenges** are being developed every day at the **grass roots** – and government shouldn’t be supplanting those efforts, it should be **supporting those efforts**.

“Instead of wasting taxpayer money on programs that are obsolete or ineffective, government should be seeking out **creative, results-oriented** programs ... and helping them **replicate their efforts** across America.”

-President Obama, June 30, 2009

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About SIF

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

SIF combines public and private resources to grow the impact of innovative, community-based solutions that have compelling evidence of improving the lives of people in low-income communities throughout the United States.

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So why the Social Innovation Fund? These two quotations capture why the Social Innovation Fund and similar efforts are necessary.

There are many instances – across the country - of community challenges being effectively addressed. However, this isn’t happening at a large enough scale to solve the challenges.

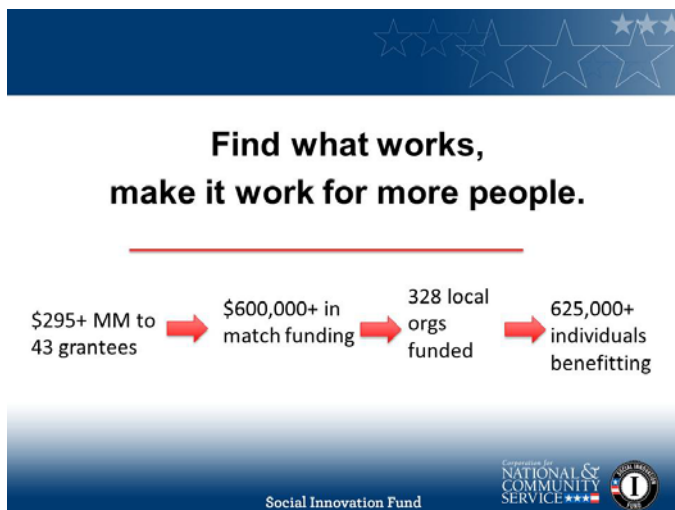
There is a role for government to play in identifying and growing these effective approaches, rather than funding programs that either: A) Studies suggest are not effective, or B) Studies haven’t even been conducted to determine whether they are effective or not.

In a time of dwindling resources and increasing needs, it’s imperative that all funders (individuals, philanthropy, the corporate sector and government) focus our precious resources only on what we know is truly making a difference in people’s lives.

The SIF has two distinct programs with the same overarching goal of mobilizing public and private resources to find and grow community solutions with evidence of strong results.

The SIF Classic Program, which we'll be mostly speaking about today, funds experienced grantmakers to evaluate and grow innovative community-based solutions making an impact on low-income communities across the country.

The SIF Pay for Success Program, or PFS, funds nonprofits and state and local governments to enable communities to pursue new models of financing social interventions that measurably improve the lives of low-income individuals.



SIF’s mission is simple and straightforward: To find what works, and make it work for more people.

Our purpose is to grow the impact of these effective solutions to community challenges to truly improve the lives of more people, with particular attention paid to those living in low-income, under-resourced communities.

Since our first grants in 2010, across both our programs, SIF Classic and SIF Pay for Success, we have awarded over \$295 million in federal funding to 43 organizations – our grantees. Our grantees and their subrecipients have leveraged those funds to generate nearly \$600,000 in matching funds. These organizations are running effective programs serving over 625,000 people across the country who weren’t previously receiving those services.

So now, to delve deeper into the SIF Classic approach, this slide depicts the different elements in our approach that utilizes: grantmakers, innovation, match, evidence, scale and knowledge sharing.

Experienced Grantmakers form the foundation of our approach. We select them competitively and rely on them to identify the innovative solutions and select the nonprofit organizations (referred to as subgrantees) that will implement those solutions.

The innovative solutions or the programs that the nonprofits implement must have documented evidence of effectiveness. This evidence falls along a continuum from preliminary to strong.

While part of the SIF, these programs are required to be rigorously evaluated to further assess effectiveness.

Both the Grantmakers and the subgrantees are required to match the funds they receive at a fairly high level – for every dollar in federal funds they receive, both the Grantmakers, and the subgrantees have to raise \$1 in non-federal funds.

While part of the SIF, these programs are scaled or grown to serve more individuals and have greater impact.

And finally, we're committed to knowledge sharing. We'll share the results of the evaluations and we'll also disseminate what we are learning from the work of our intermediaries and subgrantees.



3 Focus Areas



Youth Development Economic Opportunity Healthy Futures

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We fund in three broad focus areas that I will describe in more detail: Youth Development, Economic Opportunity, and Healthy Futures.

So first, Youth Development, this covers activities ranging from cradle to young adulthood. A wide variety of activities which might include: reading proficiency, successful outcomes for children aging out of foster care, college enrollment and retention, improving outcomes for youth involved in the juvenile justice system, and employment just to name a few.

Youth Development Focus Area



Preparing America's youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives

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Economic Opportunity Focus Area



Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals

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Economic Opportunity also encompasses a range of activities that increase economic opportunities for the economically disadvantaged. As examples, current programming include: workforce development, financial education and counseling, housing, and social enterprises that engage the hard-to-employ.

Healthy Futures Focus Area



Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness

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And finally, Health Futures focuses on activities that improve health outcomes for people of all ages. Examples of current programming includes: supportive housing for the chronically homeless that reduces the cost to the public for their health care, reducing childhood obesity through physical activity and nutrition education, and integrated health care in rural areas.

What It Takes To Be Successful

- Committed and involved board and leadership
- Flexibility and willingness to change and adapt
- Strong fundraising expertise and capacity
- Capacity to plan and execute an open grant competition
- Development of capacity in:
 - Federal grants management
 - Oversight and management of subgrantees
 - Evaluation

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This slide lists a few of the necessary characteristics of a successful SIF grant and grantee.

The SIF has lofty goals and challenging requirements so it is critical that board and other leadership of your organization be committed at the application stage and remain involved throughout the program.

Flexibility and a willingness to change and adapt are important characteristics to deal with the unexpected. Strong fundraising expertise and capacity is imperative not just to meet your requirement but because you will need to support your subgrantees in their fundraising efforts as well.

SIF intermediaries are experienced grantmakers but may not have run truly open competitions before so the ability to reach out beyond your existing networks is important.

And you will need to develop strong capacity, using staff and/or consultants, in: Federal grants management; Oversight and management of subgrantees including the provision of training and technical assistance; and Evaluation - a benefit of our program, according to current intermediaries, is how one's evaluation capacity is strengthened, but it takes an investment of time and resources.

Why Apply: Grantees' Perspective

- **Double your dollars.** Hard to find dollars for evaluation and scale.
- **Be part of something bigger,** a family of pioneers demanding impact.
- Get access to **bright minds and bold thinkers** through Knowledge Network & gatherings.
- Opportunity for the White House and CNCS to **amplify your work on a national scale.**
- SIF's platform and rigor provides **"seal of approval"** and validation.
- Program Officers and evaluation experts are **partners in your success.** One on one consulting and ongoing technical assistance.
- Entrée to new local, state and **federal partnerships and funding.**
- A chance for your program to **become a national model.**

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This slide lists some of the things we've heard from current and past grantees about why the SIF made sense for their organization. Funding for a rigorous evaluation and technical assistance in implementing that evaluation is one of the key ones to highlight because while everyone understands the importance of evaluation, not everyone funds it.



And finally, I'll leave you with this Martin Luther King Jr quote because it captures a core belief of ours here at the SIF.

That is: that there is a fierce urgency of now because it is possible to be too late for children, youth and adults in challenging circumstances that can have long-term negative impacts on their lives and those of their families. If a child doesn't learn to read by the 3rd grade when it is time to start reading to learn rather than learning to read, if youth involved in the justice system don't receive the proper guidance and support, or if healthy habits aren't learned, or if a parent can't make a living wage to support her family, that is the fierce urgency of now with which we are all confronted.

Thank you.

This slide lists key documents and resources including the webpage where you can find all you need to learn more about this grant opportunity:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/sif>

I encourage you to go to this website to check out all the resources, including on evaluations, developing your financial system.

Key Documents & Resources

www.nationalservice.gov/SIF

Click on: 2016 Notice of Funding Availability

- **NOFA and application instructions**
- **Frequently Asked Questions**
- **Evaluation and other resources**
- **Link to previous successful applications**

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How to Reach Us

Email: SIFApplication@cns.gov

Voicemail: 202.606.3223

Updates: Sign up at www.nationalservice.gov/sif

And then finally, this is the information for how to reach us. SIFApplication@cns.gov or leave a voicemail at 202-606-3223 and we encourage you to sign up for updates on the Social Innovation Fund and this grant competition. Thank you.

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