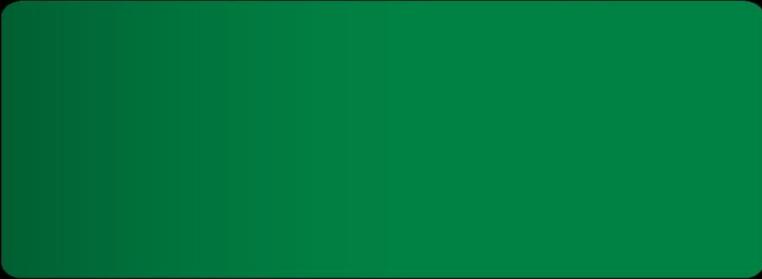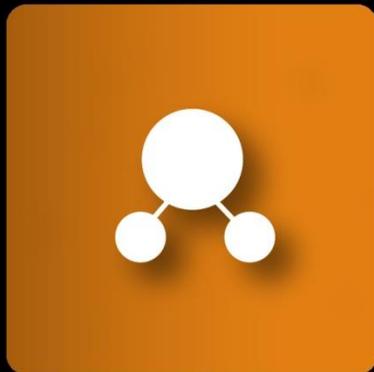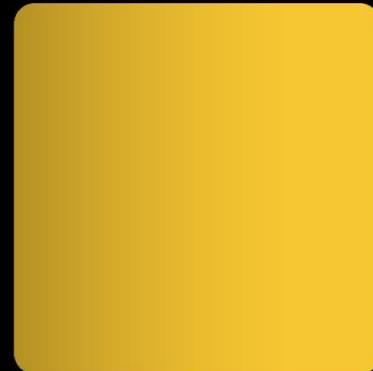# Issue Brief #4:
Evidence of Organizational Change among SIF Grantees

ICF INTERNATIONAL

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

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Issue Brief #4:

Evidence of Organizational Change among SIF Grantees

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1.   Introduction

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) leverages public and private resources to grow community solutions based on evidence of results. The National Assessment of the SIF seeks to document and capture the impact the SIF has on key program stakeholders. Findings from this multi-component independent assessment, conducted by ICF International, will tell the story of the SIF and identify lessons learned. The SIF makes grants to experienced grant-making organizations, which identify promising programs within communities through an open and competitive process and distribute funds to high-performing nonprofit organizations that implement them, and match the federal funds dollar-for-dollar. SIF subgrantees also match the funding they receive dollar-for-dollar. All SIF-funded interventions undergo rigorous, independent evaluations to advance the base of evidence for the funded intervention.

This issue brief shares lessons about changes in SIF grantees' organizational capacity – infrastructure, skills, attitudes, and behaviors – to carry out their work as grantmaking organizations, including strengthening their own infrastructure and building their capacity to conduct and use evaluations, scale promising programs, and select and support subgrantees in ways that build the evidence base for promising community interventions. The SIF National Assessment survey collected data about change in organizational behavior in such key areas as competitive grantee selection, support for grantees, evaluation, scaling up effective programs, and communication and collaboration. The survey was augmented with in-depth interviews with SIF grantees to learn more about change they reported in the survey and to obtain documentation of important changes. This report presents evidence of change in grantees' organizational capacity, based on examples grantees described in these interviews and related documentation they provided.

2.   Selection of Subgrantees

The goal of the SIF is to identify interventions that are effective in addressing pressing community needs. To help achieve this goal, SIF grantees are selected through a rigorous, open competition and the grantees, in turn, are required to select subgrantees through a similar competitive process. Many philanthropic grantmakers invest in particular organizations with which they have ongoing relationships. SIF required grantees to expand their pool of applicants more broadly by requiring an open competition. For some grantees, the SIF model was significantly different from the way they had previously made funding decisions. Results of a 2015 National Assessment survey showed that about one-third of SIF grantees reported changes in their subgrantee selection practices, and a majority of those grantees attributed the changes to their participation in the SIF.

> **Tools and Resources: Assessing Evaluation and Financial Management Capacity**
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> The Green Light Fund developed a set of tools for assessing applicants' evaluation and financial management capacity. Application reviewers used the **evaluation assessment tool** to assess the strength of applicants' current level of evidence, based on the soundness of their theory of change, their history with using evaluation, and their data collection capacity. Reviewers also rated applicants' capacity to conduct an evaluation, based on their budgets, personnel, understanding of SIF levels of evidence, and evaluation methods.
>
> The **financial management survey** required applicants to provide copies of documents demonstrating their financial capacity, such as IRS forms, financial statements, audits, accounting policies, and procedures manuals. It also required them to describe the financial management qualifications of key staff and discuss their organizational policies and procedures for financial management.

The SIF requirement for competitive selection helped grantees be more systematic about selecting subgrantees, identify applicants with strong evidence, and reach applicants they would not have reached otherwise. Some grantees that found value in the SIF competitive selection process adopted a full SIF-style open competitive selection process for one or more of their non-SIF programs; others adopted elements of the competitive process that suited their programs and approaches.

2.1 The SIF helped grantees build a more systematic process for subgrantee selection.

The SIF competitive selection process required grantees to be explicit about the criteria on which they evaluate potential subgrantees and consistent about how they rate applicants on those criteria. SIF grantees developed and used various combinations of Requests for Proposals (RFPs), external and internal review teams, and tools and frameworks for reviewing funding applications and selecting subgrantees in a systematic way. Grantees developed tools for assessing subgrantee capacity to do things like conduct rigorous evaluations and manage finances, such as those described in the *highlight box on the previous page.* One grantee developed a standard framework for ensuring all applications were reviewed against the same criteria, which was shared widely through the organization and adapted for other grantmaking efforts.

2.2 The SIF selection process helped grantees choose subgrantees with strong evidence.

SIF grantees were better able to identify applicants with a strong evidence base and the capacity to build evidence further. Both the results of the 2015 National Assessment survey and information grantees shared in follow-up discussions showed that grantees designed SIF solicitations to clearly articulate the initial level of evidence they expected of subgrantees and required applicant organizations to provide evidence of intervention effectiveness and a plan for rigorous evaluation of the intervention. The example in the *highlight box to the left* describes how one grantee identified specific outcomes it expected subgrantees to be able to achieve. One grantee revised its RFP to ask for research, frameworks, best practices, and past experience to support applicants' likelihood of achieving proposed impacts. Several others incorporated a logic model requirement into their RFPs, which required applicants to clearly outline their current use of evaluation and their plans for conducting evidence-based interventions. Only those applicants with the capacity for evidence could clearly demonstrate this capacity with a logic model. The logic model then served as a baseline for planning technical assistance activities for funded organizations.

> **Highlight: Focus on Outcomes**
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> The United Way of Greater Cincinnati (UWGC) partnered with other funders in Cincinnati to expand collective focus on outcomes through the SIF. A collaboration of funders specified outcomes and used a competitive process to select subgrantees that have demonstrated these outcomes in prior work. Many of these same funders then applied this model to another collaborative grant program, where they are able to identify community programs that clearly demonstrate cost savings and sustainability.

2.3 The SIF's competitive solicitation requirement helped grantees reach and engage subgrantees in areas not previously represented in their portfolios.

Through the requirement to conduct open competitive solicitations some grantees reached a broader range of applicants, including ones in markets and geographic areas they would not have otherwise reached. One grantee noted that its SIF solicitation was publicized more widely than its previous solicitations. As a result, the organization funded a different type of organization than it normally funded as a SIF subgrantee – creating the opportunity to fund more of this new type of institution in the future.

The grantee leveraged this model by applying it to other new local grantmaking activities in order to broaden the types of organizations it funds.

3.   Subgrantee Support and Capacity Building

The SIF increased the kinds and amount of support grantees were expected to provide to their subgrantees, and it required them to think carefully about how they provide this support. Results of the 2015 National Assessment survey showed that about one-third of SIF grantees reported a stronger organizational emphasis on support for subgrantees, in terms of evaluation, technical assistance, or both.

The majority of grantees that reported a stronger emphasis on subgrantee support attributed it to their participation in the SIF. According to the survey responses, SIF grantees increased their support for subgrantee program implementation, provided more funding to carry out a rigorous evaluation, and offered more training or technical assistance around conducting rigorous evaluation. Grantees saw positive outcomes when they provided the kind of hands-on support the SIF required, as described in the *highlight box to the right*. Ultimately, the support subgrantees received through the SIF was designed to give them the foundation they needed to grow their impact.

> **Highlight: Hands on Support to Subgrantees**
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> The SIF increased the amount of hands-on support and oversight that many grantees provided to their subgrantee organizations. The John A Hartford Foundation developed a strategy for providing this hands-on support to its subgrantee organizations by implementing frequent check-ins with the subgrantees and working closely with them throughout the grant. As a result, the grantee helped integrate the organizations' programmatic, clinical, finance, compliance, and human resources staff to improve program implementation. One subgrantee had difficulty developing this level of integration, and the Foundation implemented a corrective action plan to support communication across all levels of the organization

3.1 SIF grantees increased their investment in growing subgrantee capacity.

Grantees invested more in increasing the capacity of their subgrantees through the SIF—especially related to compliance, evaluation, and communications.

Compliance. The need for SIF grantees to ensure subgrantee compliance with federal requirements was so strong that several grantees hired or assigned staff members solely devoted to compliance. Early on, one grantee hired a manager for compliance and grants management to support subgrantees' organizational development, grant management, government funding compliance (with an emphasis on federal funding), and reporting. The compliance manager's role included conducting compliance-focused site visits and developing presentations to help subgrantees meet requirements. Grantees were confident that the federal compliance capacity they helped subgrantees develop through the SIF will help them leverage future federal funding.

Evaluation. One of the most important features of the SIF is the requirement that all interventions undergo a rigorous external evaluation that builds the evidence base for replication and scale up. This requirement sets a "high bar" for the SIF grantees and their subgrantees. To help meet this requirement, SIF grantees provided technical assistance (TA) to subgrantees around meeting SIF evaluation requirements and working with local evaluators. They also developed roadmaps for subgrantees to identify and address evaluation capacity needs. Some grantees held evaluation convenings for their subgrantees, which focused on growing evaluation skills, overcoming barriers to implementing evaluation plans, orienting new subgrantees to evaluation, and reviewing reporting procedures. Grantees used subgrantee feedback from convenings to improve the evaluation support they provided.

Communications. An important part of the SIF is communicating the impact of the programs it funds to the public. One grantee saw a great need for helping SIF subgrantees and other organizations it worked with effectively tell their impact stories. The grantee conducted storytelling trainings, attended by more than 200 participants, to help organizations find powerful stories to tell; craft clear, bold stories of their impact; and use their stories to increase public understanding of the mission and, ultimately, to acquire additional financial support.

3.2 The SIF helped grantees be more strategic about how they support their subgrantees.

The SIF led to a more sophisticated and standardized approach to TA than many grantees had used prior to receiving the grant. Several grantees developed standards for providing TA across sites. One grantee disseminated local practices to subgrantees through a resource website. As a result of this support, especially around documenting and capturing data, subgrantees improved the quality of their data.

SIF grantees developed a better understanding of what types of TA

Tools and Resources: Subgrantee Performance Dashboard

New Profit developed a performance dashboard to track subgrantee performance on a variety of financial, administrative, and programmatic indicators. Organizations are flagged, based on performance benchmarks, and red or yellow flags highlight potential needs for targeted technical assistance.

subgrantees needed. For example, one grantee incorporated subgrantees' input about their needs into its TA strategy, and another grantee developed a performance dashboard to track subgrantee performance in order to tailor TA, as illustrated in the *highlight box above*. Grantees culled performance and survey data from subgrantees about learning needs, goals, and priorities and identified topics for future learning.

Timing of technical assistance. SIF grantees also increased their understanding of what TA was needed at various points in their subgrantees' program lifecycle. Grantees found that early in the grants, TA needed to focus on implementation, start-up, compliance, and developing measurement plans. Subsequent TA focused on using data to inform decision-making, and TA in the later years of grants focused on evaluation and sustainability. The result of having a strategic approach to TA was that grantees knew more about the type of TA that was needed, had a better understanding of the TA they could provide to address subgrantee needs, and were better able to communicate this, as described in the *highlight box to the right*.

Tools and Resources: Menu of TA Options

By placing a strong emphasis on approaching TA in a strategic way, the SIF helped grantees understand subgrantees' TA needs, plan their TA strategies, and communicate more clearly to subgrantees the TA they could provide. The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) developed a resource that summarized the host of technical assistance options available to subgrantees so that they could better understand the assistance available to them to support and sustain the SIF model.

The SIF was the first time one grantee was able to earmark funds specifically for developing subgrantee skills around key priorities, such as evaluation, data, and evidence building. The grantee expects to expand this support with additional external investment.
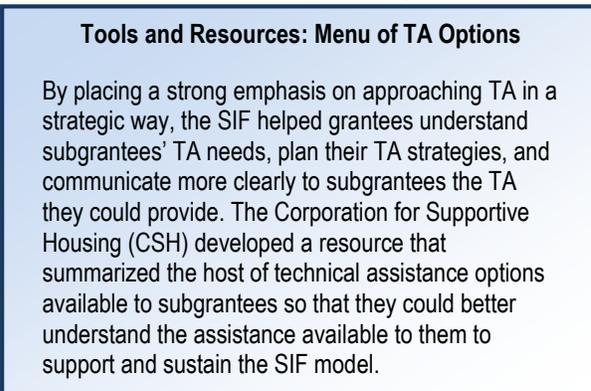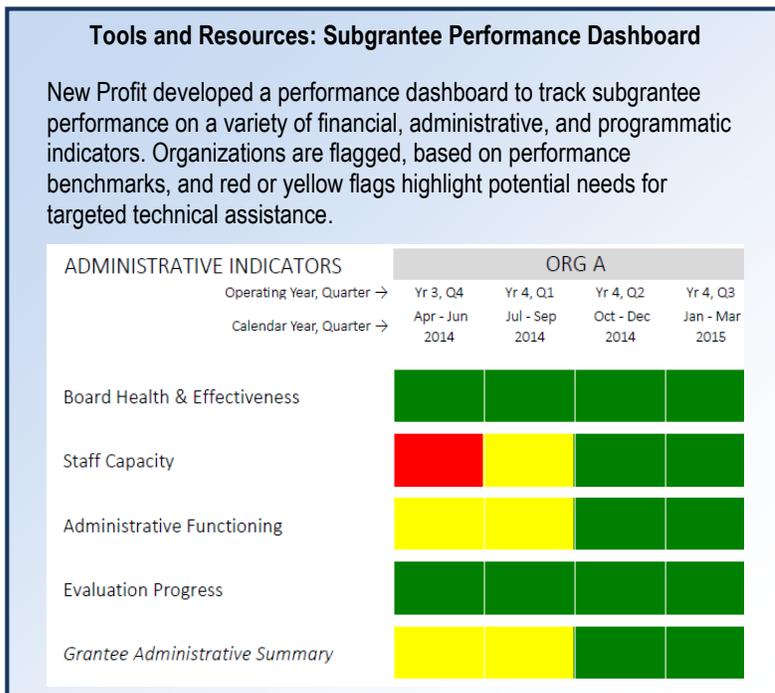
3.3 The support grantees provided to their subgrantees gave the subgrantees a solid foundation from which to grow.

Grantees helped subgrantees develop the skills they needed to implement projects with the level of rigor required of the SIF. Results of the 2015 National Assessment survey showed that there was a statistically significant change in all seven areas in which grantees were asked to assess change among their subgrantees as a result of the SIF, including subgrantees' ability to design and conduct rigorous evaluations of their interventions, and their ability to make use of evaluation findings for program improvement.

Grantees made efficient use of the TA they were required to provide by ensuring that it was useful for the SIF program, as well as applicable to efforts well beyond the SIF. One grantee realized that many of the organizations it funded, both through the SIF and through other programs, had not been trained to conduct robust data management and rigorous evaluation. As a result, the grantee and a university partner developed an organizational training and support curriculum. The curriculum provided a medium for non-profit program directors to share effective management practices and strengthen their work.

4. Evaluation

The SIF requires that grantees and subgrantees rigorously evaluate their programs to strengthen the evidence base and assess whether their approaches are effective, efficient, and lead to more impact in the communities they serve. The SIF's substantial focus on evaluation was reflected in results of the 2015 National Assessment survey, where about two-thirds of SIF grantees reported an increase in their capacity around evaluation. Of the five areas of investigation in the National Assessment, grantees reported the largest amount of change in the area of evaluation. SIF grantees planned and implemented more extensive evaluations than they had in the past, hired evaluation-focused staff to increase their evaluation capacity, engaged independent external evaluators to conduct the required evaluations, used evidence to improve results, and communicated results to prospective funders and other stakeholders.

4.1 The SIF focus on evaluation helped grantees plan and implement more—and more formalized—evaluation.

A key goal of the SIF is to build nonprofit organizations' evaluation capacity so they can assess the impact of their programs. One tool the SIF has developed and made available is the *Social Innovation Fund Evaluation Plan Guidance: a Step-by-Step Guide to Designing a Rigorous Evaluation.* To accommodate the SIF's strong

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Tools and Resources: Strategic Scorecard

The SIF served as a pilot for United Way for Southeastern Michigan to be more strategic about measuring outcomes. The grantee's SIF team worked with subgrantees to identify common outcomes and indicators on a list of key initiatives. Then, the leadership team and the board of directors developed and adopted a new organization-wide scorecard that outlined one-year performance metrics and three-year outcomes expected.

For example, for the economic opportunity key initiative, the 3-year outcome was "bridging systems that foster innovative, talent-development approaches, resulting in pathways to careers for youth and adults," and the related 1-year performance metric was "increasing cross-sector partners participating in collaborative systems development from 18 to 21 to connect individuals to careers and skilled trades." The scorecard provided space to report the projected previous fiscal year's baseline data; previous quarter, current quarter, and year to date data; and the next fiscal year's goal for each key initiative.

The scorecard was unique in that it integrated outcomes measures for all teams, including teams not focused on impact (e.g., volunteer management).

focus on evaluation, grantees implemented more formalized frameworks for preparing for and implementing evaluations, and they became more intentional about how they related evaluation results to growth. As a result of the SIF, one grantee updated its existing subgrantee administration guide to include guidance on conducting evaluations. The evaluation portion of the guide outlined expectations for subgrantee data collection, specific measures to be evaluated, guidance for collecting pre- and post-data, and data reporting protocols. This helped the grantee generate more key data that could be used to engage stakeholders and improve the quality of the data collected. See the *highlight box on the previous page* for an example of how the SIF helped one grantee become more strategic about identifying and capturing data on common outcomes and indicators.

4.2 Grantees increased their evaluation capacity with evaluation staff hires and the use of external evaluation partners.

SIF grantees learned quickly that they had to devote a significant amount of capacity to evaluation, and they engaged staff and external partners to focus specifically on evaluation. The 2015 National Assessment survey results showed that key indicators of increased evaluation capacity among SIF grantees were increases in the presence of staff position(s) or groups dedicated to evaluation and increases in the use of external evaluation partners. One grantee engaged existing staff to support evaluation under the SIF, and organizational leaders supported further increasing internal evaluation capacity, with the goal of eventually establishing a full time position dedicated to evaluation. Another grantee hired a program officer for monitoring and evaluation, with primary responsibility for leading program evaluation, monitoring program implementation, coordinating evaluation efforts with external evaluators, and providing subgrantees with evaluation TA.

> **Tools and Resources:**
> **Support for External Evaluator Selection**
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> Under the SIF, grantees and subgrantees relied on external evaluators to implement rigorous evaluations. The GreenLight Fund supported its subgrantees' use of external evaluators by providing them with an RFP template they could use to select external evaluators and by participating in interviews with prospective evaluators. The RFP template helped organizations provide prospective evaluators with background on the program's purpose, vision, and mission. It also included a sample scope of work that outlined the outcomes to be explored and measured, evaluation expectations, and potential evaluation challenges. This template helped four subgrantees run a competitive selection process to select a new external evaluator for its program.

In part as a result of the SIF experience, including the requirement for independent, external evaluators, some grantees moved to a model where evaluation support came primarily or entirely from third party evaluators, rather than from an internal evaluation team. The external evaluators specialized in providing various types of support—place-based, randomized controlled trial (RCT), qualitative data—and were selected based on subgrantees' needs for specific evaluations. One grantee provided subgrantees with tools and templates to help them select external evaluators, as described in the *highlight box on the previous page*.

Some grantees experienced growing pains as they developed the capacity to implement the SIF's rigorous evaluation requirements. But one grantee was pleased to see that this newfound capacity gave it leverage to advocate for in-house evaluation capacity in non-SIF programs. The grantee developed a data team that included a delegate from each program that used data. The organization created several new positions not funded through the SIF and gave existing staff new data responsibilities.

4.3 The SIF focus on evaluation helped grantees use evidence to improve results.

The SIF helped grantees orient their programs toward using evidence to make programmatic improvements, so they had a bigger impact in the communities they served, as illustrated in the example presented in the *highlight box to the right*. Grantees cited common outcomes frameworks to better measure success and robust data collection systems to track and monitor progress as two key developments that led to better use of evidence. One grantee used evaluation results obtained prior to and during the SIF to continually adjust and expand its goals. It focused early quasi-experimental evaluations on assessing the progress on an original set of goals. Following the first evaluation, the grantee developed a new strategic framework based on a revised and more sophisticated set of objectives and measures of success.

> **Highlight: Demonstrating the Benefits of Evaluation**
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> Conducting in-depth program evaluation is a core component of the SIF. The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) is using a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to evaluate their program. Given that subgrantees are often focused on using the SIF funding to serve as many people as possible with the supportive housing intervention, some subgrantees were hesitant to implement an RCT for fear of not being able to serve all beneficiaries in need. However, CSH worked closely with the subgrantees to understand their concerns and to demonstrate the value of an RCT evaluation. If and when the evaluation shows strong evidence, subgrantees will see that participants are served in the long term, and they can then use these results to scale the model to serve more people in need.

4.4 SIF subgrantees were better positioned to attract new funders, because they had the skills to conduct rigorous evaluations and communicate program effectiveness.

The SIF fostered a culture of evaluation by making funding available to support evaluation-related activities. Having the capacity to conduct rigorous evaluations armed grantees and subgrantees with robust data, which allowed them to better communicate their programs' positive outcomes. Potential funders were attracted to organizations that could clearly communicate preliminary results (even before final results were available) and highlight the effectiveness of their programs.

The SIF helped grantees build the evidence case, which in turn grew their base of potential funders, garnered champions within their organizations, and improved the policy case that allowed them to expand their work. Maura Riordan, of AIDS United, noted, "How we have increased our own evaluation capacity during SIF has put us in the position to be really competitive in these federal proposals. It is clear when we do the writing and reflect on how far we've come, we are in a much better place to pursue these big opportunities."

Another grantee experienced a policy shift toward more results-oriented work, which coincided with the SIF. Partners were already moving toward a results-based accountability framework, but the SIF further increased the rigor with which they evaluated their programs. It became clear that donors within their networks were looking for the kind of results rigorous evaluations produce.

5.   Scaling

The SIF identifies programs that work and supports scaling of those programs to make a deeper or broader impact in communities. The SIF helped grantees develop strategies and methods for understanding which programs could and should be scaled. Grantees used what they learned from scaling their SIF programs and applied it to scaling up other programs within their organizations.

5.1 The SIF helped grantees develop methods for choosing which interventions to scale up.

The focus on evaluation and the TA that grantees provided to their subgrantees helped them better understand which programs were likely candidates for expansion. According to results of the 2015 National Assessment survey, about half of SIF grantees noted changes in their efforts to select programs for scale-up based on rigorous evaluation that demonstrates their effectiveness. The majority of grantees that noted changes attributed them to their SIF participation.

One grantee trained its subgrantees to calculate the economic and social cost savings of providing program services, in order to determine which interventions to scale up. It used the estimated cost of delivering the programs at each of its sites to calculate the cost savings threshold, or measure of savings relative to how much was spent. Results suggested that all sites had highly achievable cost-saving thresholds, but some were more cost-effective than others and therefore more attractive for scaling.

With an understanding of which programs were likely candidates for expansion, SIF grantees could play a key role in helping to scale those programs. They developed tools and resources to help subgrantees with their scaling and replication efforts, such as the tool described in the *highlight box to the right*. One grantee developed a comprehensive tool for tracking its subgrantees' scaling efforts as part of its plan for growing SIF subgrantee impact. By populating this tool with each subgrantees' scaling plans and progress, the grantee saw how scaling evolved from year to year and understood exactly where, how, and among which subgrantees site expansion and new site growth was achieved. Another grantee tested out early stage ideas and identified the ones that aligned with larger community goals. Decisions the grantee made about how to scale these early stage ideas were largely influenced by the grantee's SIF scaling experience.

> **Tools and Resources: Preparing to Scale**
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> The SIF is focused on growing programs that can make a deeper or broader impact on communities. Mile High United Way supports scaling by helping its subgrantees describe their programs to groups that might adopt them. Mile High United Way is developing an implementation template in which subgrantees record the details of their programs. The template calls for the subgrantee to outline the need for the program, its vision and mission, its logic model and theory of change, and its core program components. The grantee encourages subgrantees to use the template to support scaling and replication efforts.

5.2 Grantees packaged what they learned from the SIF to support scaling.

The SIF served as a learning lab for grantees, who took lessons from the SIF and applied them within their organizations to support scaling efforts. Participation in the SIF allowed one grantee to increase its number of project sites and increase its data. As a result of this experience, the grantee published key lessons learned about scaling its SIF-funded programs, with a specific focus on the infrastructure required to support scaling—standards for service delivery, performance measurement, and technical assistance and training. This grantee developed a how-to guide for implementing its programming more broadly.

For some grantees, the SIF resulted in grantees creating and filling new positions, such as a scaling and replication manager. One grantee's scaling and replication manager developed and used a multimedia toolkit to showcase to other agencies, both in the region and on the national level, which interventions were the most effective. Another grantee integrated a new type of case management position into its programs and delivered webinars to publicize best practices for doing this.

The SIF also helped grantees use new-found partnerships to support scaling. Participation in the SIF put a grantee that worked largely in its local geographic area on the national stage, which helped it develop partnerships with other cities and engage more with federal agencies.

6.   Collaboration

The SIF builds collaboration and sharing of best practices and lessons learned into its model as a way to continually improve the effectiveness of the programs it funds. The SIF provided grantees with a variety of opportunities to collaborate and learn from one another, encouraged grantees to support knowledge-sharing among their subgrantees, and highlighted the value of partnerships with other organizations and potential funders. About half of SIF grantees reported in the 2015 National Assessment survey that they made use of these opportunities and saw considerable change in their participation in knowledge sharing activities, their participation in funding alliances with other nonprofit organizations, and their collaboration for the purpose of advocacy.

6.1 The SIF gave grantees a variety of collaborative learning opportunities.

The SIF afforded grantees a variety of opportunities to share resources, knowledge, and best practices with their peers. The network of SIF grantees provided a base for the grantees to engage with each other through various experience-sharing groups and meetings. For example, one grantee brought together other SIF grantees to participate in a panel at its community leaders' conference, and another grantee brought together different partners monthly for idea exchange, professional development, and collective problem solving.

The learning opportunities fostered through the SIF allowed grantees to share resources and knowledge that they can implement moving forward. For some grantees, the SIF was their first large federal grant, and they did not have policies and procedures in place to adhere to some federal requirements. Because the grantees brought a range of prior experiences (either from other grant programs or from the previous years of SIF), grantees could benefit from others' expertise. For example, one new grantee was able to learn from other SIF grantees and adopt some of their existing policies for making subgrant awards, rather than creating these materials from scratch. The grantee noted that it is stronger as an organization and better positioned to take on additional federal grants as a result of the financial policies it learned from its SIF peers. Another grantee incorporated learning goals into its programs, based on learnings from other grantees. This grantee's evaluator now works with subgrantees to identify specific learning goals and addresses those goals through evaluation.

6.2 The SIF influenced how grantees support peer learning among their subgrantees.

The SIF encouraged grantees to create networks for their subgrantees around common issues, and they used a variety of creative ways to do so, such as the collaborative problem solving approach described in the *highlight box to the right*. Some grantees had established subgrantee learning networks prior to their involvement in the SIF, but participation in the SIF helped them expand the use of the networks with funding to do so. One grantee initiated monthly small scale evaluation group calls with subgrantees. During these calls, the grantee, subgrantees, and evaluators discussed the progress of the evaluation. Another grantee conducted bimonthly meetings with

> **Highlight: Collaborative Problem-Solving**
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> SIF grantees were creative about how they brought together peers and partners for idea exchange and collective problem solving. Venture Philanthropy Partners hosted a "hackathon," modeled after convenings in which developers collaboratively create new software or improve existing software. This "hackathon" did not focus on software. Instead, it used the "hackathon" collaborative problem solving strategy by convening program partners to "get inside the youth development" system in which they worked to "identify a common barrier affecting each organization." The "hackathon" leveraged key staff from multiple organizations to address young people's access to public transportation, which can limit their participation in the educational and career preparation services that are available throughout the National Capital Region.

subgrantees to discuss a variety of topics, including evaluation, marketing, and accounting. These convenings grew to include more than just SIF partners, which is a direct result of the open learning collaborative they established through the SIF.

6.3 The SIF highlighted the value of external partnerships.

The SIF showcased to grantees the importance of connecting with partners in the areas in which they serve, especially for funding purposes. Establishing relationships with funding partners was essential for SIF grantees to meet the match requirement, especially for those implementing programs in under-resourced communities. Grantees formed creative funding partnerships, which served them during the SIF and will continue to serve them into the future. For example, one SIF grantee helped its subgrantees leverage local resources, which allowed subgrantees to gain momentum for their projects and turn the SIF work into larger grants within the community. Through helping subgrantees raise match funds in their communities, SIF grantees formed relationships with local funders, which opened up opportunities with new funding streams. The SIF match requirement also pushed another grantee to focus on multi-sector funding sources, including business, philanthropy, and government.

Expanded funding alliances. Participation in the SIF also enabled grantees to expand funding alliances to solve community problems, reaching out and engaging partners they had not worked with before. As a result of the SIF, one grantee expanded local funding alliances established prior to its participation in the SIF to include national funders. Another grantee noted that the SIF made it recognize the importance of leveraging the resources and competencies different entities offered. This highlighted the need for multiple motivated stakeholders to solve problems, and as a result of the SIF the organization is more likely to collaborate with other organizations to apply for funding. For another grantee, establishing connections with other, larger grantee organizations allowed it to share important and relevant data that could be used to inform its work.

7.   Conclusion

The SIF National Assessment asked SIF grantees to report on the degree to which SIF participation changed their organizations' capacities and practices. The examples and resources described in this report provide concrete documentation of the changes the SIF grantees have made. In addition to supporting the grantees' self-reports of change, this report helps illustrate the variety of changes the grantees have undertaken and provides examples that others can learn from for carrying out other SIF grants or similar innovation initiatives. These examples also provide a starting point for more in-depth documentation of change resources related to the SIF.

8.   Methodology

This report is based on interviews with SIF grantees and follow-up documentation they provided. All 20 members of the 2010-2012 cohorts of SIF grantees were invited to participate in a 30 minute telephone interview. Prior to the interviews, ICF reviewed each grantee's responses to the SIF National Assessment survey to identify areas where grantees reported organizational change as a result of their participation in SIF. These key areas of change guided the interviews.

Interviews were conducted between June and August 2015 with 19 of the 20 SIF grantees from the 2010-2012 cohort. Interviews were conducted by a senior team member, a separate team member took notes, and (with respondent permission) the interviews were recorded. At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer introduced the team, reviewed the interview protocol, and—based on the survey responses—

reviewed and confirmed with the grantee the areas where the organization's responses indicated organizational change. For each change area, the interviewer asked for more detailed information about the change, asked about evidence to support the reported change, and requested copies of available documentation. Of the 19 interviewees, 16 provided documentation of change to ICF. Documentation was filed on the ICF network for analysis. The remaining three referenced key changes, but did not have documentation of the changes to provide.

9.   About The Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund, an initiative of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) under the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, is a new approach by the federal government to address urgent national challenges. The fund mobilizes public and private resources to grow the impact of promising, innovative community-based solutions that have evidence of compelling results in three areas of priority need: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development.

The operating model of the SIF is distinguished by the following six elements:

Innovation | Evidence | Scale | Grantmakers | Match | Knowledge Sharing

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