

Investing in Innovative Community Solutions

The President and First Lady have called on our nation's foundations and philanthropists to partner with the Administration to invest in innovative, successful solutions that have the potential to grow and address the needs of more communities across the country.

On May 27, 2010, the White House and the Corporation for National and Community Service announced the initial phase of philanthropic commitments in support of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) and other investments in innovative community solutions that have the potential to make more lasting progress toward solving our nation's challenges.

The SIF is a new competitive grant program housed at the Corporation for National and Community Service that was designed to expand innovative solutions with evidence of strong results in communities throughout America. The SIF will drive more resources to high-impact nonprofit organizations working in three areas of national priority: Economic Opportunity, Youth Development/School Support, and Healthy Futures.

"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."

— President Barack Obama

"By focusing on high-impact, results-oriented non-profits, we will ensure that government dollars are spent in a way that is effective, accountable and worthy of public trust."

— First Lady Michelle Obama

The SIF is a new approach for the federal government focused on:

- Investing in innovative community solutions with evidence of impact and the potential to move to other communities in need; and,
- Building cross-sector partnerships with those leading change in their communities, including nonprofits, businesses, foundations, and philanthropists.

The following private foundations and philanthropists are committing a total of **\$45 million** over the next two years to match SIF grants or invest in other innovative community solutions:

- **The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation** (\$10 million over 2 years)
- **John and Ann Doerr's Family Foundation** (\$5 million over 2 years)

- **Omidyar Network** (\$10 million over 2 years)
- **The Open Society Foundations' Special Fund for Poverty Alleviation** (\$10 million over 1 year)
- **The Skoll Foundation** (\$10 million over 2 years)

Additionally, an independent consortium of more than 20 national and regional funders has come together to invest almost **\$5 million** in the "Scaling What Works" initiative, to provide complementary funding for key initiatives to build the infrastructure needed for the long-term success of the SIF. Led by the nonprofit organization Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO), this initiative will invest resources to help extend the reach, learning, and impact of the SIF by:

- Building more effective partnerships between philanthropy and the public sector to speed the pace at which community solutions scale;
- Providing a mechanism for more donors to support the growth of promising nonprofit organizations; and,
- Providing a platform for collaborative learning so SIF intermediaries can learn from each other and share their lessons with all communities.

The Council on Foundations also released a letter signed by the heads of more than 130 community foundations around the country who endorsed the creation of the Social Innovation Fund and signaled their strong support for the Administration's initiatives to invest in innovative nonprofit programs and other solutions that are being developed in communities across America.

BACKGROUND

The Social Innovation Fund was authorized in the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act in April 2009. Congress appropriated the President's full \$50 million request for the SIF for FY2010.

Approximately 260 organizations collaborated to submit 69 applications for the initial SIF grant competition which closed on April 8, 2010, affirming the promise of the SIF to break down barriers to cooperation. The organizations applying for SIF grants include nonprofits, foundations, universities, local governments, private donors and businesses. The applications come from 25 states and the District of Columbia and propose work in each of the three areas of national priority. In July, the Corporation expects to announce the first awards to intermediary organizations.

The Corporation has designed a comprehensive and rigorous process for selecting grantees and has recruited more than 60 recognized experts in nonprofit leadership, social innovation and program evaluation to rate and provide other input on the applications.

For additional information, please visit the Corporation for National and Community Service's Social Innovation Fund website - www.NationalService.gov/Innovation

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