

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 16, 2010

CONTACT: Ashley Etienne
202.606.6944; aetienne@cns.gov

National Service Agency Requests Applications for Social Innovation Fund Competition

*The Agency Announces \$50 Million Available for Organizations to Invest in Effective Nonprofits
Working in Low-Income Communities*

Washington, DC—The Corporation for National and Community Service today released a Notice of Federal Funds Availability (NOFA) for the newly-created Social Innovation Fund (SIF). Applications are due by April 8, 2010, 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

“Too many social challenges have been allowed to fester when innovative approaches are already delivering results in communities throughout the U.S. – it doesn’t have to be this way,” said Stephen Goldsmith, the Chair of the Corporation’s Board of Directors. “The SIF will help ensure that high-impact nonprofits are able to attract the public and private resources they need to grow and improve the economic, education and health prospects of low-income communities.”

The SIF, authorized by the 2009 Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, is specifically designed to:

- Promote public and private investments in effective nonprofit community organizations to help them replicate and expand to serve more low-income communities;
- Create new knowledge about how to solve critical social challenges; and
- Develop the grantmaking infrastructure necessary to support the work of social innovation in communities across the country.

Instead of granting directly to nonprofit community organizations, like most Federal grant programs, the SIF channels funding through a network of “intermediary” organizations. These intermediary organizations – existing grantmaking institutions or partnerships – will host competitions within six months of the award to identify and fund nonprofit community organizations (subgrantees) with evidence of impact and effectiveness. Intermediaries will support this portfolio of subgrantees over time, and also assist with evaluation to help generate new knowledge about what works to address critical social challenges. Subgrants will be awarded to nonprofit community organizations working in the areas of economic opportunity, youth development and school support, and healthy futures.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, the Corporation will award up to \$50 million in Federal funding to approximately seven to 10 intermediary organizations. Annual awards to intermediaries will be in the range of \$1 million to \$10 million. The SIF funding mechanism will leverage \$3 in private funding for every \$1 in Federal funding, generating a total public-private investment of \$200 million in FY 2010.

The release of the final NOFA followed a one-month public comment period that generated over 200 public comments from a broad array of stakeholders, including potential intermediaries, nonprofit organizations and experts with deep experience in grantmaking, social change, evaluation, replication and expansion.

“The input of the nonprofit and philanthropic communities has greatly improved the final product that we’re publishing today,” said Goldsmith. “This is a key first step toward providing the financial capital and the ideas to focus public and private resources on what works, so our nation can make dramatic progress on key social challenges.”

The public comments were instrumental in generating policy changes that significantly broaden SIF eligibility. In particular, the comments led to:

- A lowering of the minimum grant award to \$1 million from \$5 million in the draft NOFA.

This change will enable a broader pool of intermediaries to apply, including grantmakers working in rural areas or states with less philanthropic resources.

- The elimination of an explicit preference for intermediaries that have already selected their subgrantees at the time of application.

This change will ensure that a broader pool of effective nonprofit community organizations have a chance to access SIF funding and work in partnership with SIF intermediaries. It will also increase the quality of the subgrantees selected, as intermediaries will not rush to complete their processes by the application deadline.

The final NOFA retains strict criteria for successful intermediaries. Successful intermediary applicants will have:

- A strong track record of using rigorous evidence to select, invest in, support, and monitor the replication and expansion of their subgrantees;
- The capacity to conduct a competitive process for selecting innovative nonprofit community organizations with effective and potentially transformative approaches;
- Expertise in one or more priority issue areas; and
- Deep and broad relationships with stakeholders in one or more priority issue areas and and/or specific geographic regions.

Potential intermediary applicants can access the full NOFA at:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/serveamerica/innovation.asp>

Applicants must apply using the Corporation’s eGrants system. The eGrants Web site is:

<https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>

[Click here](#) to listen to the conference call held by the Corporation on February 16 on the SIF NOFA.

###

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America programs, and leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit Nationalservice.gov.