

## **ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service  
Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2014 Social Innovation Fund Cooperative Agreements  
Announcement Type: Initial Announcement  
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**NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY DEADLINE:** Applicants are strongly encouraged to send a Notice of Intent to Apply by **March 24, 2014**.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** Applications are due **April 22, 2014** at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Successful applicants will be notified in August, 2014.

### **OVERVIEW**

The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and other programs and activities, CNCS has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action. In 2009, Congress passed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (SAA), the most sweeping expansion of national service in a generation. This landmark law not only expands service opportunities, it focuses national service on key outcomes; builds the capacity of individuals, nonprofits, and communities to succeed; and encourages innovative approaches to solving problems, including through the establishment of the Social Innovation Fund.

Through the Social Innovation Fund, CNCS has augmented its traditional activities with an enhanced focus on identifying and growing innovative, evidence-based approaches to our nation's challenges.

The Social Innovation Fund is an innovative program that awards grants to and works with existing grantmaking institutions, referred to in this Announcement of Federal Funding Availability (Notice) as "intermediaries." These intermediaries are funded to support high-performing community-based nonprofit organizations that validate and grow promising outcomes-focused approaches to challenges facing local communities. This *Notice*, in alignment with the SAA and the CNCS Strategic Plan, will target grantmaking in three Focus Areas:

- Youth Development
- Economic Opportunity
- Healthy Futures

As one of the Obama Administration's "tiered-evidence initiatives", the Social Innovation Fund embodies a commitment to use rigorous evidence both to select recipients of federal funding and to validate the impact of their program models. The program also represents a key part of the Administration's efforts to advance social innovation as a strategy to address critical social challenges. It is driven by three core principles: (1) many of the most compelling solutions to persistent social problems in low-income communities are being developed in those communities and not in federal offices in Washington, DC; (2)

significant impact can be generated for society by proactively identifying the best community-based solutions, strengthening their evidence base, and supporting the growth of their impact; and (3) the federal government can help drive social innovation by stimulating, focusing and enhancing public-private partnerships and cross-sector collaborations to grow the impact of the best community solutions.

As it relates to the Social Innovation Fund, “**innovative approaches**” are new ways to solve old problems that are faster, cost-effective, data-driven, and lead to better results for the public good. Specifically, the Social Innovation Fund seeks the development and strategic scaling of promising and potentially transformative evidence-based and evidence-informed social innovations that solve critical community problems.

For the purposes of this *Notice*, an approach is evidence informed if it refers to interventions that have a preliminary level of evidence of effectiveness per Section D.4. (Evidence and Evaluation) of this *Notice*. An approach is evidence based if it has a moderate or strong level of effectiveness per Section D.4. (Evidence and Evaluation) of this *Notice*.

An approach is “**transformative**” if it not only produces strong impact (as defined in this *Notice*), but also:

- (1) presents a new solution or novel adaptation or application of a solution to a critical local or national challenge where existing solutions or interventions have not been proven to be effective, are not achieving outcomes at scale, or are too slow to respond,
- (2) has the potential (as evidenced by data) to affect how the same challenge is addressed in other communities,
- (3) addresses more than one critical community challenge concurrently, and/or
- (4) produces significant cost savings through gains in efficiency.

Although the practice of social innovation is sometimes understood to be the invention and testing of new ideas, the Social Innovation Fund seeks to support innovations that have advanced beyond the nascent stages, are showing signs of effectiveness, and have the potential for greater scale. The nonprofit marketplace offers many sources of funding for the earliest stages of idea-development and innovation, where new ideas can be explored and tested.

The Social Innovation Fund believes that its funds are most appropriately and responsibly used for programs that have advanced past the earliest stages, have at least preliminary evidence of results and are ready for more substantial evaluation and expansion to communities in need of promising innovations. These promising, evidence-based and evidence-informed innovations may be relatively new, have not been demonstrated to be effective for multiple populations, or have limited current market penetration. They will have a body of operational experience and at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness, as defined in this Notice.

So far, the Social Innovation Fund has competitively selected 20 intermediaries to implement programs in low-income communities around the country. To learn more about our existing grantees and to read their

full applications to CNCS, see: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/social-innovation-fund/funded-organizations>.

CNCS is committed to transparency in grant-making. This *Notice* includes a description of the application review and selection process in Section IV. *Application and Submission Information*. In addition, the following information for new and re-competing applications will be published on the CNCS website at (<http://nationalservice.gov/about/open-government-initiative/transparency/results-grants-competition>) within 90 business days after all grants are awarded:

- A blank template of the external review form
- A list of all compliant applications submitted
- Executive summaries of all compliant applications as submitted by the applicants
- The official cover sheet and program narratives for successful applications
- A list of all external reviewers that completed the review assignment
- Summaries of external reviewer comments on successful applications

In addition, all grantees of the Social Innovation Fund will be required to release, at a minimum, the following information about their subgrant competitions:

- A description of their subgrantee selection process
- A list of external reviewers for their subgrantee selection process
- A list of awarded subgrantees
- Summaries of external reviewer comments on successful subgrant applications
- The full applications of awarded subgrantees

This *Notice* should be read together with the Social Innovation Fund Application Instructions.

Publication of this *Notice* does not obligate CNCS to award any specific number of cooperative agreements or to obligate the entire amount of funding available.

**FULL TEXT OF NOTICE**

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## **I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Purpose of Social Innovation Fund Funding**

The purpose of the Social Innovation Fund is 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. The Social Innovation Fund directs resources toward increasing the evidence-base, capacity, and scale of the organizations it funds in order to improve the lives of people served by those organizations. The Social Innovation Fund also generates broader impact by leveraging grant funding to improve how philanthropies, federal government departments and agencies, state and local government, and community-based organizations deploy funds to address social challenges. Additionally, it enhances the ability of the nonprofit sector to support the growth of innovative, high-impact organizations.

#### **Operating Model**

The operating model of the Social Innovation Fund has been explicitly designed to advance these objectives and is distinguished by five key elements:

- 1) Relying on intermediaries (also called “grantees”) with strong skills and track records of success to do the critical work of competitively selecting, validating, and growing high-performing nonprofit organizations (“subgrantees”). At least 80 percent of awarded federal funds must be invested in subgrantee programs.
- 2) Requiring that each federal dollar granted by the Social Innovation Fund be matched 1:1 by the intermediaries with money from private and other non-federal sources and that each subgrant awarded by these intermediaries also be matched 1:1 by the subgrantees
- 3) Requiring that all intermediaries select subgrantees to implement interventions that are both innovative and at least evidence-informed and then engage subgrantees in formal evaluations of program performance and impact which substantively advance the sector’s knowledge base. These interventions must have at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness.
- 4) Providing capital to both evaluate and scale the intervention. In many cases, a given intervention may have promising evidence that it is effective in a particular community, at a small scale, or for a certain population. The SIF provides both the operational dollars and evaluation dollars to test if these positive results hold true as the program grows and achieves “scale” or is adapted to other populations or communities.
- 5) Requiring each intermediary to commit to knowledge sharing and other initiatives that advance social innovation more generally in the nonprofit sector.

Successful intermediaries must have strong track records of successfully engaging in the key processes that constitute the essential work of the Social Innovation Fund:

- Selecting high-performing nonprofits (“subgrantees”) implementing promising interventions with a high potential for generating strong impact.
- Supporting these organizations in increasing capacity, scale and impact.
- Substantively evaluating implementation and results for the subgrantees.

In this context, **high-performing** refers to nonprofit organizations that are well-run and financially healthy with capable leadership, clear goals and clear objectives; that diligently collect quality data and use this data to understand which of their efforts work and which do not; and that use this knowledge to make adjustments to their approach to continuously improve.

The term **promising interventions** refers to a model at a specific stage of development that, at a minimum, must have at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness as defined in this *Notice*.

Within the SIF framework, we refer to two types of scaling: **scaling the delivery** of the model by serving more of the original population, and **scaling the applicability** of the model by testing if the intervention continues to be effective for additional populations or geographic areas. For interventions with preliminary levels of evidence, scaling the delivery will generally allow the intervention to achieve a sufficient size to support a stronger evaluation and further validate the model.

For interventions with moderate and strong levels of evidence, scaling delivery generally will allow for more substantial growth to provide services to larger numbers of people in the current or new geographic area(s), while scaling the applicability of the model would call for more limited expansions of the model to test the effectiveness of the intervention with new populations or locations.

Not all organizations with preliminary evidence have reached a stage of development or produced the kind of substantial results that would make them ready for large-scale growth or expansion. Instead, they should focus on the kind of limited scaling that aims to further validate the model.

## **B. Funding Priorities**

In the 2014 competition, CNCS expects to fund applicants that successfully meet the requirements and respond to the Selection Criteria described in this *Notice*. Within that context, CNCS seeks to target its 2014 grantmaking towards intermediaries that seek to develop programs and target applicants that are not only enhancing or expanding their own model but are also addressing the most critical local and national challenges and seeking to fill gaps in the available evidence base. CNCS continues to expect that all grantees will serve the vulnerable populations within the below focus areas.

Specifically, this *Notice* prioritizes 2014 grantmaking toward the following Focus Areas, approach and beneficiaries.

### **Focus Areas**

CNCS will only award funds to intermediaries proposing to make subgrants to nonprofit organizations targeting one or more of the focus areas listed below. Applications that do not specifically identify a focus area will not be considered for funding. The FY 2014 SIF focus areas are:

- Youth Development – Preparing America’s youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives

- Economic Opportunity – Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals and/or
- Healthy Futures – Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness

### **“Low-income communities”**

As specified in section 198K of the National Community Service Act (NCSA), Social Innovation Fund intermediary grantees must make subgrants and otherwise support programs that serve “low-income” communities. For purposes of this *Notice*, “low-income community” means either:

- A population of individuals or households being served by a subgrantee on the basis of having a household income that is 200 percent or less of the applicable federal poverty guideline, or
- Either a population of individuals or households, or a specific local geographic area, with specific measurable indicators that correlate to low-income status, such as, but not exclusive to, K-12 students qualifying for free- or reduced-lunch, long-term unemployment, risk of homelessness, low school achievement, persistent hunger, or serious mental illness. An application that proposes to rely on measurable indicators should fully describe the basis for relying upon those indicators (including citations to appropriate studies). The application also must describe and cite the source of data supporting the conclusion that the targeted community meets the indicators.

### **“Significantly philanthropically underserved” communities**

For purposes of this *Notice*, CNCS considers applicants to be serving significantly philanthropically underserved communities if they support subgrantees that carry out activities in low-income communities that have considerably less than the average number of active philanthropic institutions or investments as similarly populated communities in their state or region. If applicable, applicants must describe, using data and statistics, why and how this definition applies to their community.

### **Optional Funding Priorities**

In addition to addressing one or more of the above focus areas, which is a mandatory requirement, CNCS is particularly interested in supporting applications that propose to include one or more of the following optional priorities:

- A Collective Impact Approach
- Targeting of at least one of the following types of beneficiaries:
  - Opportunity Youth
  - Traditionally Underserved and Underrepresented Geographic Areas and Populations
- Presidential Initiatives to Expand Access to Opportunity

While there are no points assigned for addressing one or more of the optional funding priorities, high scoring applications that address a priority are more likely to be recommended for funding than those that do not. Descriptive explanations of each priority follow.

## Collective Impact Approach

CNCS is interested in testing models that use a Collective Impact approach. Collective Impact is a promising model in which sector coalitions form to identify a common set of challenges and evidence-informed and evidence-based solutions, and then work together to implement the solution. CNCS is interested in learning whether this approach can demonstrate at least a moderate level of evidence in producing better outcomes than other, singular or additive models.

Collective Impact efforts should include the following characteristics:

- **Common Agenda:** All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.
- **Decision Making, Data, and Shared Measurement:** Agreement from all participants to implement solutions that are at least evidence-informed. Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants to ensure that efforts remain aligned and that participants hold each other accountable.
- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities:** Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
- **Continuous Communication:** Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and appreciate common motivation.
- **Investment and Sustainability:** There is broad ownership from all participants in building infrastructure and resources to sustain the work and continuously improve outcomes.
- **Backbone Organization:** Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate entity with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and to coordinate participating organizations and agencies. Successful applicants will have demonstrated experience leveraging the Collective Impact approach with existing “backbone” entities.
- **Evaluation and Accountability:** To be funded by the SIF, collective impact approaches must include a strategy for rigorous evaluation, including a strategy for isolating causal effects of the approach.

## Target Beneficiaries

CNCS is interested in proposals focused on meeting the needs of Opportunity Youth and traditionally underserved populations.

**Opportunity Youth:** Opportunity youth are defined as young people between the ages of 14 to 24 who are homeless, in foster care, involved in the juvenile justice system, or who are not employed or enrolled in the education system<sup>1</sup>. Between five and seven million youth – one in six young people are not connected to education or jobs. Costs to the nation from direct and indirect social costs were estimated to be \$93 billion for 2011 alone<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> President’s FY 2013 Budget – General Provisions, Sec.737 Performance Partnership Pilots

<sup>2</sup> Final Report, Community Solutions for Opportunity Youth, June 2012, White House Council on Community

CNCS is particularly interested in proposals that use place-based collective impact or network development approaches that bring together all organizations that work with youth to create a community system that tailors delivery of services to the needs of youth at various stages of development and reconnection. This service delivery should result in outcomes that are achieved more rapidly and are at levels that reflect a significant improvement over the status quo.

The types of organizations that tend to focus on this issue include but are not limited to education, youth development, workforce development, health and human services organizations, as well as employers, industry groups, and labor unions, particularly those running pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.

Federal and private sector efforts are identifying new directions for policies and programs. New designs and enhancements of services are producing program interventions which are more comprehensive and intensive, provide sequences of connected services, support transitions for youth along pathways to better outcomes, and use data systems to continuously plan, assess, and improve services, systems, and outcomes. Interventions for opportunity youth focus on the following key elements in creating pathways to school, career, and life success:

- *Re-engagement*: identifying youth who have been disconnected from education, employment and stable housing, including those who have been in foster care or in juvenile justice placements; understanding the specific needs of the population, and working closely with youth to connect them to strong programs and supports that have at least preliminary evidence that they can help them surmount their individual challenges.
- *Educational Momentum*: helping youth reach early and frequent education milestones in addition to attaining longer term education goals, such as completing a high school degree, GED, and postsecondary credential or degree.
- *Connection to Employment*: connecting youth with relevant training and work experiences to help them gain the credentials and connections that will facilitate their entry into family-supporting careers.
- *Stable Housing*: promoting safe and stable housing arrangements during and after program participation.
- *Youth Development*: helping youth develop healthy relationships and leadership skills; addressing their social, emotional, physical, and behavioral health needs; and engaging youth as partners in creating pathways for their own success and for contributing to the well-being of their communities.

Applicants should propose interventions that are based on these definitions and characteristics, but they can be expanded or augmented as evidence shows to be appropriate for greater impact.

*Information on proven or promising practices and policies can be found at:*

*<http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/evidence-innovation>.*

**Traditionally Underserved and Underrepresented Geographic Areas and Populations:** CNCS strives to ensure that the Social Innovation Fund portfolio includes those intermediaries that serve

significantly economically underserved geographic areas or geographic areas that are not being currently served by the Social Innovation Fund. We also aim to include vulnerable populations that are traditionally underserved in communities nationwide. As such, this *Notice* seeks applicants with robust plans to target and select applicants that serve such populations, including but not limited to rural and economically depressed communities, tribal communities, disabled populations, veterans, etc. CNCS provides these examples that are commonly known to and prioritized by us, but permit applicants to demonstrate through data other traditionally underserved, underrepresented populations they wish to target.

**Presidential Initiatives to Expand Access to Opportunity:** In alignment with SIF’s mission and the aforementioned priorities, CNCS will also give priority to eligible grantmaking institutions with high scoring applications that propose to contribute to local strategies designated under Presidential priority initiatives to expand access to opportunity for low income individuals and distressed communities, such as the Promise Zone initiative. If a SIF applicant is applying as a Promise Zone partner, a partnership agreement with the Promise Zone lead organization must be included for this priority preference to apply.

To see a map of current Social Innovation Fund programs, visit our website:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/social-innovation-fund/social-innovation-fund-map>

Applicants proposing programs that receive priority consideration are not guaranteed funding and all funded applicants will first need to demonstrate that they have effectively met program requirements, especially those related to use of evidence and evaluation capacity.

## C. Performance Measurement

Grantees will be required to use performance measures to assess progress. Grantees should expect to work with CNCS to finalize the expected performance measures they will use which may include some standardized performance measures related to their identified focus areas. **For the purposes of this Notice, applicants should disregard the Performance Measures section of the Application Instructions.**

## D. Key Program Requirements

### 1. Match

Social Innovation Fund intermediaries are required to match the entire amount of federal funds expended on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The match must be in non-federal cash; in-kind match is not allowable. At the time of their application, Social Innovation Fund applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet 50 percent of their cash match requirement. Subgrantees also will be required to match the full amount of the grant they expend from the intermediary on a dollar-for-dollar basis, in cash. CNCS is interested in applicants that present both a strong capacity to raise additional dollars to be provided to subgrantees, and a serious commitment to share the fundraising burden of their subgrantees.

## 2. Subgranting

By statute, intermediaries must select subgrantees on an open, competitive basis. This means that intermediaries must run an open competition that is available to eligible nonprofit organizations beyond their own existing grant portfolio or network.

Intermediary applicants may propose subgrant funding strategies that are of two distinct types. In both cases, the intermediary will have defined a specific social problem it intends to address through its own Social Innovation Fund. Under one strategy, the intermediary will be seeking and investing in subgrantee organizations that have themselves developed and/or implemented innovative solutions to the specified problem. Under the other strategy, the intermediary will have identified the innovative solution and will be seeking subgrantees that are able to effectively implement that solution.

CNCS will require Social Innovation Fund grantees to submit for approval detailed plans for selecting subgrantees. The subgrantee selection plan will include the following:

- The estimated number or range of subgrant awards that will be made
- Whether the subgrantees will be: 1) implementing more than one intervention across multiple subgrantees with separate evaluation plans, 2) implementing more than one intervention across multiple subgrantees in which all subgrantees are participating in the same evaluation, or 3) implementing the same intervention across all subgrantees in which all subgrantees are part of the same evaluation.
- The estimated range of subgrant award amounts, noting:
  - How the grantee will ensure that nonprofits with preliminary levels of evidence receive less funding for scaling than nonprofits with higher levels of evidence.
  - How the grantee will ensure subgrantees have the information they need, based on best practices and lessons learned, to develop adequate evaluation budgets, and outline such plans accordingly.
  - How the grantee will ensure that applicants have thoroughly addressed long-term sustainability and funding streams after SIF dollars have ended.
- A description of:
  - How key subgrant eligibility criteria required by this *Notice* will be determined, particularly the level of evidence currently established for proposed subgrantee programs.
  - How the intermediary will assess the subgrantee's capacity to implement evaluation requirements.
  - The proposed review and selection process.
  - Who will review grant applications and how the process will ensure appropriate conflict of interest policies are in place.

Intermediaries may propose their own unique processes for selecting subgrantees, but their selection process must ensure that the following information is available to all potential applicants:

- The desired characteristics and eligibility requirements of organizations the intermediary is seeking as subgrantees.
- How to obtain and submit an application.

- The selection criteria that will be considered in reviewing applications, including the relative percentages, weights, or other means used to distinguish among the criteria
- Requirements for program growth and the evaluation of subgrantees that are selected.
- The evaluation strategy the intermediary intends to pursue, e.g. one evaluation for all subgrantees, an individual evaluation for each subgrantee, or a combination. This should also include information about the anticipated budget requirement for the evaluation, including what portion of the evaluation the intermediary expects to cover and what portion will be the responsibility of the subgrantee.
- If the grantee intends to implement one intervention across all subgrantees, the grantee must develop and submit a preliminary summary and outline of their proposed subgrantee evaluation plan (SEP), which documents the evaluation’s technical design and demonstrates how the plan will measure and increase the program model’s evidence base. These plans must be approved by CNCS before implementation.

Subgrants are to be made in annual amounts over \$10,000 in sufficient size and scope to enable the subgrantee to build its capacity to manage initiatives and sustain replication or expansion for the initiatives. Subgrants should be for a period of between three and five years. Social Innovation Fund intermediaries should award larger programmatic and scaling dollars to programs that show higher levels of evidence, as defined in section *I.C.4. Evidence and Evaluation* below, and have higher capacity. Applicants should note that their subgrantees will be required to provide dollar-for-dollar matching funds, in cash, for each year that they receive a Social Innovation Fund subgrant.

Successful intermediary applicants will need to demonstrate plans for achieving the program goals and requirements through its subgrant programs. Experience with previous Social Innovation Fund grantees has shown that this can be challenging for subgrantees at the lowest level of funding. Therefore, if an applicant is proposing subgrants at the minimum level, the applicant will need to explain how they plan to ensure sufficient capacity for meeting program and evaluation requirements at the minimum level of funding.

In order to maximize the impact of the Social Innovation Fund and ensure a diverse array of innovative grantees across the federal government, intermediary applicants should direct Social Innovation Fund funds toward innovations that will not receive grants for the *same* activities from other federal innovation funds (e.g., “Investing in Innovation” at the federal Department of Education). Final Social Innovation Fund award decisions may take into consideration the outcomes of other federal competitions.

### **3. Growing the Impact of Program Models**

One of the purposes of the Social Innovation Fund is 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. Further, the Social Innovation Fund is explicitly focused on high-performing organizations that have sufficient evidence of the effectiveness of their program model (detailed in section *I.C.4. Evidence and Evaluation*) and the organizational capacity to justify at least limited growth as the organization progresses toward the “strong evidence building” stages.

Subgrantees may grow the impact of their program model in several ways, including through expansion of existing program sites or replication of the program to new sites in different communities. However, all strategies should involve expanding the selected solutions so that more people in low-income communities derive substantial, measurable benefit.

All intermediaries who receive funding will be required to propose and implement detailed plans for growing their reach during the period of their grant and ensuring fidelity to the program model. These plans will include at a minimum the following information:

- How growth is supported by existing evidence and connected to the subgrantee's plan to improve its level of evidence
- The estimated number of additional people expected to benefit from the program each year due to growth
- The strategies subgrantees will use to generate growth in the number of people reached through strategies such as expansions in current locations, replication of the program model to more locations or other methods that do not require physical expansion (for example, expanded use of technology, adoption of wide-scale policy mandates, etc.).
- The estimated number of and description of new populations and locations to be reached, and the strategies subgrantees will use to generate such growth
- The services, including training and technical assistance, the intermediary will provide to subgrantees to facilitate the planned growth and ensure fidelity to the program model
- How the intermediary will track and assess actual growth of service capacity as measured compared to the estimates included in their plan.

While all subgrantees will be expected to demonstrate growth during their time in the Social Innovation Fund, CNCS expects that there will be a direct, positive relationship between the levels of growth that intermediaries propose for given subgrantees and the level of evidence the subgrantees possess at the time of their selection for funding. For example, a program that has strong evidence of impact would be expected to have a more ambitious growth plan than a program with preliminary evidence; we would not expect to see a plan for broad replication from a subgrantee with preliminary evidence. Likewise, programs with higher levels of evidence that have higher growth targets would receive larger funding awards.

#### **4. Evidence and Evaluation**

CNCS will select Social Innovation Fund intermediaries that have a track record of using evidence to select and invest in their grantees. In this *Notice* CNCS defines three tiers of evidence: preliminary, moderate, and strong. CNCS will select Social Innovation Fund intermediaries that propose to both fund program models with at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness and support further evaluation of those models in order to improve the level of evidence and develop greater understanding of what makes the program successful.

*Evaluation Requirements.* The program models funded by Social Innovation Fund intermediaries must produce rigorous evaluative evidence that not only assesses effectiveness, but also builds the

existing evidence base for the intervention/model. Evaluations are expected to be conducted by third party and independent evaluation partners.

Accordingly, it is the expectation of CNCS that each program model will achieve moderate or strong evidence of impact (as defined in this section) by the end of its three to five year subgrant period. Because of the rigor of such evaluation designs, program models with only early stages of preliminary evidence may not be appropriate candidates for subgrants through the Social Innovation Fund. Applicants at this stage must be able to demonstrate a compelling plan for how they can meet rigorous compliance standards and achieve moderate or higher levels of evidence. Please refer to the definition of promising *models* in section I. A. *Purpose of Social Innovation Fund, Operating Model*, for more information.

Intermediaries and subgrantees are required to commit significant time and resources to ensure formal evaluations of each program model that receives Social Innovation Fund funding. As noted in section VI.F *Continuation Funding Information and Requirements*, successful development of the plans, including achieving CNCS approval, is a consideration for continued grant funding.

Once selected, Social Innovation Fund intermediaries should expect to participate in and manage several activities to ensure the successful evaluation of models within their portfolios. These activities include, but are not limited to:

- Develop an overall portfolio evaluation strategy (PES) that reflects the key outcomes and levels of evidence their subgrantees are expected to achieve, and describe their contracted research partners, timetable, budget, and methodology for coordinating all stakeholders and required evaluation activities.; the PES will be reviewed by CNCS
- Develop individual subgrantee evaluation plan (SEP) for each funded intervention (which could be an overarching model or unique to each subgrantee) that documents the evaluations' technical design and demonstrates how each plan will measure and increase the program model's evidence base; these plans must be approved by CNCS before implementation
- Provide any necessary capacity building and technical assistance to their subgrantees to ensure they are able to build their capacity to accomplish all Social Innovation Fund-related evaluation requirements and continue to measure their program model's impact into the future
- Ensure the implementation of individual subgrantee evaluation plans and report progress and results to CNCS
- Collaborate with CNCS to review and strengthen their strategies and plans and ensure appropriate implementation and reporting of each plan.

*Use of Contracted Research Partners.* CNCS expects that most intermediaries will choose to contract with a research partner and/or require their subgrantees to contract with a research partner to help with some or all of the following activities:

- Determining the technical design of their evaluations plans for assessing program fidelity and impacts

- Implementing their CNCS-approved evaluation plans and reporting on the evidence collected
- Conducting technical assistance for subgrantees to build their capacity to accomplish all Social Innovation Fund-related evaluation requirements and continue to measure their program model's impact into the future.

CNCS strongly suggests applicants consider hiring a research partner, particularly if they do not have the capacity or skills within their own staff to meet evaluation requirements for the program.

*Funding for Evaluation Activities.* CNCS recognizes that rigorous evaluations are expensive and that nonprofits often are unfamiliar with these processes and costs because many funders do not make evaluations a priority. Given the central role that evaluation plays in the success of the Social Innovation Fund, please be advised that intermediaries and their subgrantees are expected to allocate appropriate resources to cover the many activities related to the evaluation of each program model's effectiveness. Your application should specifically indicate your estimated costs related to evaluation. Refer to section VIII. A. *Technical Assistance* of this *Notice* for a link to evaluation tips, including considerations when budgeting for evaluation.

*CNCS Role.* CNCS is committed to supporting intermediaries in their efforts to increase the evidence of program effectiveness within their Social Innovation Fund portfolios. The agency will work closely with intermediaries to meet this goal by providing them with technical assistance on the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of their subgrantee evaluation plans. All subgrantee evaluation plans proposed by intermediaries will require the approval of CNCS before implementation. CNCS sees this process of ongoing evaluation and knowledge building as a key aspect of the Social Innovation Fund that can improve grantee and subgrantee programs and also benefit other organizations throughout the nonprofit sector.

*Evidence Tiers.* CNCS will use the following definitions of preliminary, moderate, and strong evidence recognizing that there are multiple levels of development within each tier. These definitions are consistent with those used by the Office of Management and Budget:

- Preliminary evidence means evidence that is based on a reasonable hypothesis supported by credible research findings. Thus, research that has yielded promising results for either the program model or a similar program model will meet CNCS' criteria. Examples of research that meet the standards include: 1) outcome studies that track participants through a program and measure participants' responses at the end of the program; and 2) third-party pre- and post-test research that determines whether participants have improved on an intended outcome.
- Moderate evidence means evidence from previous studies on the program, the designs of which can support causal conclusions (i.e., studies with high internal validity) but have limited generalizability (i.e., moderate external validity). This also can include studies for which the reverse is true—studies that only support moderate causal conclusions but have broad general applicability.

The following would constitute moderate evidence: (1) At least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental study supporting the effectiveness

of the practice strategy, or program, with small sample sizes or other conditions of implementation or analysis that limit generalizability; (2) at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental study that does not demonstrate equivalence between the intervention and comparison groups at program entry but that has no other major flaws related to internal validity; or (3) correlational research with strong statistical controls for selection bias and for discerning the influence of internal factors.

- **Strong evidence** means evidence from previous studies on the program, the designs of which can support causal conclusions (i.e., studies with high internal validity), and that, in total, include enough of the range of participants and settings to support scaling up to the state, regional, or national level (i.e., studies with high external validity). The following are examples of strong evidence: (1) More than one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study or well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study that supports the effectiveness of the practice, strategy, or program; or (2) one large, well-designed and well-implemented randomized controlled, multisite trial that supports the effectiveness of the practice, strategy, or program.

Of Note: CNCS sees the relationship between evidence and program growth as an iterative process. While subgrantees must have at least preliminary evidence of the effectiveness of their proposed program model in order to receive funding, CNCS recognizes that all programs move through stages in developing a greater body of evidence. Depending on the circumstances and the existing data about an intervention, different types of evaluation design or data collection could be appropriate.

As a result, in order for each program model to achieve moderate or strong evidence of impact by the end of the three to five year subgrant period, CNCS expects that some models may require a set of evaluations to build their evidence-base during their grant. The agency will work with intermediaries to determine appropriate short-and-long term evaluation plans to meet this goal.

## E. Relationship to Other Federal Evidence-Based Programs

Given that innovation funds currently exist in the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor to invest specifically in evidence-based programs in education, employment and training system delivery, teen pregnancy prevention, home visiting, and health care delivery. CNCS does not intend to make Social Innovation Fund awards to programs in these areas unless they clearly propose a solution to an unmet need which cannot be funded through these other funding streams, as identified in consultation with these Departments. CNCS also intends to ensure the Social Innovation Fund is not simply adding dollars to existing initiatives. As such, we will prioritize efforts where SIF dollars can serve a unique and integral purpose to advance and accelerate the innovation. To learn more about key innovation and evidence initiatives at the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor, please visit their websites:

### Department of Education

- Investing in Innovation Fund:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html>

### Department of Health and Human Services

- Teen Pregnancy Prevention Tiered Evidence Initiative:  
[http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen\\_pregnancy/](http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/)  
[http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen\\_pregnancy/db/](http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/db/)
- Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Tiered Evidence Initiative:  
<http://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/>  
<http://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/homevisiting/>
- Employment Opportunity and Youth Development Research and Evaluation  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre>
- Health Care Innovation  
<http://innovation.cms.gov/>

### Department of Labor

- Workforce Innovation Fund: [http://www.doleta.gov/workforce\\_innovation/](http://www.doleta.gov/workforce_innovation/)
- Office of Evaluation: <http://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/AllStudies.htm>

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Estimated Available Funds**

According to the FY 2014 Congressional Appropriations, \$65.8 million is available for SIF grant awards this fiscal year. CNCS expects to provide the first three years of funding [at the time of the initial award] to all intermediaries, so long as they have demonstrated the capacity to meet SIF's rigorous compliance and match raising standards for all three years. CNCS reserves the right to prioritize continuation grants. Based on recent experience and expressions of interest, CNCS anticipates that this Social Innovation Fund grant competition will be highly competitive.

Publication of this *Notice* does not obligate CNCS to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of funding available.

### **B. Estimated Award Amount**

Annual award amounts for the FY 2014 Social Innovation Fund grant competition will vary. Per statute, CNCS will make annual awards in the range of \$1 million to \$10 million per year. CNCS expects to make larger grants to intermediary organizations seeking subgrantees with moderate or strong evidence of effectiveness. As has occurred previously, CNCS may make awards that provide multiple years of operational funding.

## C. Project Period

The grant award covers a three to five year project period. Applicants' project and evaluation plans should represent the full three to five year period they are requesting. As stated previously, CNCS expects to provide the first three years of funding at the time of the initial award to all intermediaries, so long as they have demonstrated the capacity to meet SIF's rigorous compliance and match raising standards for all three years. Grantees are eligible for continuation funding in subsequent years contingent upon:

- Satisfactory performance, including making appropriate progress in advancing the evaluations and growth of subgrantees, that signals the intermediary is on track to achieve its approved objectives at the end of the grant
- Demonstrated capacity to manage the grant
- Compliance with grant requirements, including terms and conditions, reporting, and securing the required match
- Availability of Congressional appropriations.

Please see section *VI.F Continuation Funding Information and Requirements* for more information.

## D. Funding Instrument

The funding mechanism for Social Innovation Fund is a cooperative agreement, which provides for substantial involvement by CNCS with the grantee organizations (intermediaries) as the approved grant activities are implemented. The assigned CNCS program officer will confer with the grantee on a regular and frequent basis to develop and/or review service delivery and project status, including work plans, budgets, periodic reports, evaluations, etc. In particular CNCS anticipates having substantial involvement in:

- Setting parameters for subgrantee selection
- Developing and approving subgrantee selection plans and incoming level of evidence associated with subgrantee intervention
- Developing, approving, and monitoring the implementation of subgrantee evaluation plans
- Developing and approving subgrantee growth plans
- Documenting and sharing lessons learned through a CNCS-sponsored learning community.

## III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### A. Eligible Applicants

This competition is open to existing grantmaking institutions or eligible partnerships. A grantmaking institution is an organization in existence at the time of the application that invests in nonprofit community organizations or programs through grants as an essential rather than a collateral means of

fulfilling its mission and vision. The emphasis on grantmaking activities as a part of an organization's mission should be evident in the applicants' mission statement and promotional materials, and should be clearly reflected as a significant percentage of their annual operating budget.

In keeping with this view, grantmaking institutions will generally:

- Conduct open or otherwise competitive programs to award grants to or make investments in a diverse portfolio of nonprofit community organizations, which may have included in-network organizations
- Negotiate specific grant requirements with nonprofit community organizations
- Oversee and monitoring the performance of grantees.

Eligibility has been expanded for the FY 2014 competition to include a wider range of organizations. In past years, grantmaking institutions that had a history of only making grants within an affiliated network (in-network only), were not considered eligible to compete for SIF funding if they did not meet a rather narrow definition of the term "existing grantmaking organization," even if they were willing to open up their competitions. After several years of program experience, CNCS believes such organizations are well positioned to identify innovative, evidence-based solutions through a more open form of grantmaking and provide the strategic support, oversight, and technical assistance that is critical to success.

Therefore, this year, in an effort to seek more innovation and impact, applications from primarily in-network only grantmaking institutions will be considered if they clearly and specifically propose to conduct open subgrant competitions that will involve investing in a diverse portfolio of out-of-network nonprofit community organizations, but which may propose to include a limited number of in-network investments that do not exceed approximately one-third of the grant dollars to be distributed. In all other respects, an in-network grantmaking organization is required to meet the same eligibility requirements as other existing grantmaking institutions as set out below.

A unit of government is not considered to be an existing grantmaking institution. A unit of general local government may participate in an eligible partnership, but cannot itself apply without an existing grantmaking institution partner. Other units of government may collaborate with an existing grantmaking institution or eligible partnership.

A university is also not considered an existing grantmaking institution for purposes of this *Notice*, but may collaborate with an existing grantmaking institution or an eligible partnership.

An **eligible partnership** is a formal relationship between an existing grantmaking institution (as defined above) and either an additional grantmaking institution, a State Commission on National and Community Service, or a chief executive officer of a unit of general local government where the partner organizations will share responsibilities under the award. In a cooperative agreement with a partnership, CNCS would expect to be dealing with each partner organization with some degree of independence concerning their collective responsibilities. For example, a partnership could include one organization that handles all aspects of a Social Innovation Fund program related to evaluation, while another organization handles all aspects related to finances and grant administration.

Other collaborations, which may be similar to consultant or contractor arrangements, in which an organization obtains access to needed competencies but remains fully responsible for performance of the cooperative agreement, will not be treated as partnerships for purposes of determining eligibility.

Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this *Notice*. Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501 (c)(4), that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply.

Current Social Innovation Fund grantees may apply under this *Notice*. However, previous funding from CNCS or another federal agency is not a requisite to apply under this *Notice*. If a current Social Innovation Fund grantee applies, it must seek funding for a program that is distinct from the program currently being funded. An application from an existing grantee to expand a program currently supported by the Social Innovation Fund into different geographical areas will not be considered an application for a distinct program.

Applicants that do not meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline will be ineligible for review and consideration in this competition.

For purposes of the Social Innovation Fund, **nonprofit community organizations** which may receive subgrants will include:

- Organizations described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and exempt from taxation under section 501(a); and
- Any entity or organization described in sections 170(c)(1) or (2) of the Internal Revenue Code.

It should be noted that the types of organizations which can receive Social Innovation Fund subgrants includes most charitable organizations, states, local governments (and other political subdivisions), public schools, tribes, as well as certain faith-based organizations and other educational institutions.

## **B. Matching Requirements**

FY 2014 Social Innovation Fund intermediary grantees are required to match their grant dollar-for-dollar. The match must be in cash from non-federal sources. Subgrantees will be required to provide the same match—dollar-for-dollar in cash—for every dollar they expend as well. Please note that federal rules apply to the federal funds awarded as well as to the match funds contributed by the grantee. For example, the cost of raising funds in order to meet the matching funds requirement is not an allowable cost under the OMB cost principles.

**At the time of application, Social Innovation Fund applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet 50 percent of their cash match requirement.**

The statute allows intermediaries serving a community that the intermediary can demonstrate is significantly philanthropically underserved to apply for a match reduction of up to 50% if it is having extreme difficulty raising match due to extreme circumstances. The match reduction waiver will only be granted in extraordinary circumstances.

## C. Other Requirements

### 1. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and **System for Award Management (SAM)**

Applications must include a DUNS number **and** an Employer Identification Number. The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number.

You can get a DUNS number at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. Although the website indicates a 48-hour e-mail turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers, we recommend you register at least 30 days before the application due date.

All applicants must be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM, <https://www.sam.gov>) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and, should a grant be made, throughout the life of the award. Finalize a new registration or renew an existing one at least two weeks before the application deadline. This should allow you time to resolve any issues that may arise.

If you do not comply with these requirements, you could become ineligible to receive an award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at:

[https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/SAM\\_Quick\\_Guide\\_Grants\\_Registrations-v1.6.pdf](https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/SAM_Quick_Guide_Grants_Registrations-v1.6.pdf).

**CNCS requires all entities that plan to apply for federal grant funds, that receive federal grant funds, or that receive subgrants directly from a federal grantee to:**

- Be registered in the SAM before they submit an application
- Maintain an active SAM registration with current information while they have an application under consideration by CNCS and for their entire active award period, if any
- Provide its active DUNS number in each application it submits to CNCS.

CNCS is prohibited from making an award until an applicant has complied with these requirements. CNCS may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award if the intended recipient has not complied with these requirements at the time an award is ready to be made.

### 2. **Requirements to be Compliant for Review**

In order for an application to be reviewed, the applicant must:

- a) Submit a budget that reflects a federal share of between \$1 million and \$10 million

- b) Submit a budget that reflects a plan to distribute at least 80 percent of awarded federal funds to subgrantees. Note: for further information on this requirement, please see the Budget Instruction in the separate application instructions.
- c) Demonstrate either cash-on-hand or commitments (or a combination thereof) toward meeting 50 percent of the required first year matching funds, based on the amount of grant funds requested at the time of submission. For example, a request of \$1 million needs to be accompanied by documentation of \$500,000 in cash on-hand or commitments at the time of application. Instructions for how to provide documentation of matching funds are provided in section IV. F. *Submitting Match Verification Documentation*.
- d) Declare its status as either a geographically-based or issue-based Social Innovation Fund that will focus on improving measurable outcomes. CNCS asks applicants to use a thematic approach in describing their proposed investments in community organizations.

As established in section 198K of the NCSA, there are two basic operational models of Social Innovation Fund intermediaries. The first is a Social Innovation Fund that will operate in a single geographic location, and address one or more priority issues within that location. This model is referred to as a “geographically-based Social Innovation Fund.”

The second model is a Social Innovation Fund that will address a single priority issue area in multiple geographic locations. This model is referred to as an “issue-based Social Innovation Fund.” CNCS will assess whether the application properly proposes goals and objectives as either a geographically-based or an issue-based Social Innovation Fund.

*i. Geographically-Based Social Innovation Fund*

To apply as a geographically-based Social Innovation Fund, the applicant must propose to focus on serving low-income communities within a specific local geographic area, and propose to focus on improving measurable outcomes related to one or more of the following priority issue areas:

- Youth Development
- Economic Opportunity and/or
- Healthy Futures.

*ii. Issue-Based Social Innovation Fund*

To apply as an issue-based Social Innovation Fund, the applicant must propose to focus on addressing one of the following priority issue areas within multiple proposed target low-income communities in multiple geographic locations:

- Youth Development
- Economic Opportunity or
- Healthy Futures.

- e) Submit an application in a timely manner as provided in this *Notice*; and
- f) Submit an application that is complete, in that it contains all required elements and follows the instructions provided in this *Notice*.

### **3. Requirements to be Eligible for a Grant Award**

In order to be eligible for an award, applicants must:

- a) Be an existing grantmaking institution or an eligible partnership, as defined in section *III.A. Eligible Applicants*.
- a) Have an evidence-based decision making strategy. Applicants must include information in their application that describes the ways they use evidence and evaluation to:
  - Select and invest in subgrantees
  - Measure the effectiveness of subgrantees
  - Support, monitor, and assess the success of subgrantees' growth
  - Achieve measurable outcomes.

Applicants also must have a well-articulated proposal to:

- Select and grow subgrantee programs that have been shown to have at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness and
- Implement and/or oversee evaluations of all subgrantee program models to grow the evidence base for their funded interventions.

Plans may include collaborating with research organizations to carry out rigorous evaluation of subgrantees.

## **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **A. Address to Request Application Package**

The Social Innovation Fund Notice and Application Instructions can be found online at:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2014/2014-sif-competition>.

For further information or for a printed copy of related material, call (202) 606-3223 or email [innovation@cns.gov](mailto:innovation@cns.gov). The TTY number: 800-833-3722.

### **B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

#### **1. Application Content**

Your application must provide a well-designed plan with a clear and compelling justification for receiving the requested funds. Reviewers will assess your application on the basis of your program design, organizational capability, and cost effectiveness and budget adequacy.

Your completed application must have the following components and must be submitted by the application deadline, as noted in section *IV.C Submission Dates and Times*:

- **Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet:** This is automatically generated when you complete the data elements in the eGrants system. When you complete the application in eGrants, many of the fields will automatically be filled with information you entered during your registration process.
- **Narratives**
  - **Executive Summary:** This is a brief description of your proposed program. The Executive Summaries of all compliant applications are published on the CNCS website following grant awards.
  - **Program Design**
  - **Organizational Capability**
  - **Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy**
- **Standard Form 424A Budget**
- **Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications**
- **Performance Measures.**

## 2. Page Limits

Do not exceed 45 double-spaced pages for your Narratives, including the Standard Form 424 (SF-424), Executive Summary, and Program Narrative as the pages print out from eGrants. **The Budget section and Performance Measures are not included in the page limit.**

**Please note that reviewers will be instructed to stop reading the Narrative section of the grant application after page 45.** Reviewers will not consider material past the page limit, even if eGrants allows its submission. We strongly encourage you to print out your application from the “Review and Submit” page before you submit it, in order to make sure it is within the page limit.

Do not submit supplementary material such as videos, brochures, letters of support, or any items not requested in this *Notice*. CNCS will not review or return them.

## 3. Submission in eGrants

You must submit your application electronically via eGrants, CNCS’s web-based application system (<https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>). We recommend that you create an eGrants account and begin your application at least three weeks before the deadline. You should draft your application as a word processing document, then copy and paste it into eGrants no more than 10 days before the deadline.

Contact the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677 or via ([https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask\\_eg](https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask_eg)) if a problem arises when you create an account or prepare or submit your application. National Service Hotline hours are Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. EST. Be prepared to provide your application ID, organization’s name, and the *Notice* to which you are applying.

If technical issues will prevent you from submitting an application on time, please contact the National Service Hotline **before** the deadline to explain the technical issue and to get a ticket number. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, you must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit via eGrants.

If extenuating circumstances make it impossible for you to submit in eGrants, you may send a paper copy of your application to the address in section *VII. Agency Contacts* of this *Notice* via overnight carrier. Please use a non-U.S. Postal Service, in order to avoid security-related delays. **All deadlines and requirements in this *Notice* also apply to paper applications.** Paper applications must include a cover letter detailing the circumstances that make it impossible to submit via eGrants. CNCS does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.

## C. Submission Date and Time

### 1. Notice of Intent to Apply

Although it is not required, CNCS strongly encourages you to submit a **Notice of Intent to Apply**. To do so, please state your intent to apply in a note to [innovation@cns.gov](mailto:innovation@cns.gov) by February 21, 2014. Please include the name of the applicant organization, address, contact person, and phone number in your Notice of Intent to Apply. The Notice of Intent to Apply helps CNCS plan an efficient application review process and allows CNCS to notify applicants directly if application materials are updated.

### 2. Application Submission Deadline

The application is due no later than **April 22, 2014 by 5:00 p.m.** Eastern Time. Applications must arrive at CNCS by the deadline in order to be considered (see section *VI.B. Content and Form of Application Submission* for more information). Applications received after the deadline will be determined non-compliant and therefore not eligible for review and consideration. CNCS reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and will post any extended deadline in eGrants.

### 3. Late Applications

CNCS may consider an application after the deadline, but only if you submit an e-mail explaining the extenuating technical circumstance that caused the delay. CNCS will determine the admissibility of late applications on a case-by-case basis. However, please be advised that CNCS will not consider an advance request to submit a late application.

You must send the e-mail to [LateApplications@cns.gov](mailto:LateApplications@cns.gov) within the 24 hours immediately after the deadline. Communication with CNCS staff, including your program officer, is not a substitute for sending a letter to [LateApplications@cns.gov](mailto:LateApplications@cns.gov). If technical issues prevented you from submitting an application on time, please include your eGrants National Service Hotline ticket number in your e-mail. You may get a ticket number by calling the National Service Hotline before the deadline and explaining the technical issues that prevented you from submitting your application on time.

If extenuating circumstances make it impossible for you to submit in eGrants, you may send a paper copy of your application to the address in section *VII. Agency Contacts* of this *Notice* via overnight carrier. Please use a non-U.S. Postal Service to avoid security-related delays. **All deadlines and requirements in this *Notice* also apply to paper applications.** Paper applications must include a cover letter detailing the circumstances that make it impossible to submit via eGrants. CNCS does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.

## D. Intergovernmental Review

Applicants under this program are not subject to *Executive Order 12372: Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs*.

## E. Funding Restrictions

Cooperative agreements under this program are subject to the:

- Applicable Cost Principles under OMB Circulars A-21 (2 CFR part 220), A-122 (2 CFR part 230, or A-87 (2 CFR part 225)
- Uniform Administrative Requirements for grants under A-102 (45 CFR part 2541) or A-110 (45 CFR 2543 or 2CFR part 21)
- Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) if an award goes to a for-profit organization.

See [www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/circulars](http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/circulars) for further information on the Circular(s) that apply to your organization(s). Awards will also be subject to the law(s) under which the award is made (e.g., SAA), as well as specific terms and conditions established for cooperative agreements or defined in Provisions or Special Conditions attached to an award. If necessary, applicants will have an opportunity to negotiate conditions before they accept an award.

## F. Submitting Match Verification Documentation

At the time of submission, applicants must demonstrate through a letter or other form of documentation that they have either cash-on-hand or commitments (or a combination thereof) toward meeting 50 percent of their first year matching funds, based on the amount of federal grant funds applied for. For example, a request of \$1 million needs to be accompanied by documentation of \$500,000 in cash on-hand or commitments at the time of application. Signed letters verifying match, as well as all other required documentation, can be sent via email to [SIFApplication@cns.gov](mailto:SIFApplication@cns.gov) or via overnight carrier (non-U.S. Postal Service to avoid security-related delays in receiving mail from the U.S. Postal Service) to the following address:

Corporation for National and Community Service  
ATTN: Office of Grants Policy and Operations/Social Innovation Fund Application  
1201 New York Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20525

When submitting match verification by email, applicants should reference their application ID and organization name in the subject line of their email. Match verification, as well as all other documentation must be received by the application deadline. Submission of evidence of match by the application deadline is a compliance criterion.

## V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

### A. Selection Criteria

Reviewers will assess the applications against the following Selection Criteria: Program Design, Organization Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy. The weights assigned to each category are detailed in the following chart. Reviewers will assess application narratives against these Selection Criteria and weigh them accordingly.



In assessing applications, reviewers will examine the degree to which the applicant clearly and convincingly responds to the criteria below.

#### **Application Executive Summary**

Applicants will be required to provide an Executive Summary of their applications. Executive Summaries will be used to determine compliance with requirements and eligibility for the competition, but will not be used by reviewers to assess the quality of applications.

## 1. **Program Design** (45%)

*Please note the following definition of terms in this section:*

- Applicants with a pre-identified intervention: The applicant is applying to scale the reach of impact of a specific, single evidence-based or evidence-informed intervention.
- Applications without a pre-identified intervention: The applicant is applying to address a specific issue (or range of issues) but does not plan to select the evidence-based or informed intervention the subgrantees will implement. Rather the subgrantees will apply having selected their own evidence-based or informed intervention aligned with the grantee's goals.

### a) **Goals and Objectives**

For All Applicants, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Identifies themselves as either a geographically-based or an issue-based Social Innovation Fund as defined in section III.C.2 d.
- Clearly identifies the target community or geographies that they will serve and the target issue(s) on which their programming will focus.
- Makes a persuasive case that they have identified an issue of critical national and/or local importance using statistical information for the need related to the issue area(s) identified in the target geographical area(s) listed.
- Demonstrates that solutions currently being implemented to address the selected issue or geography have not been proven to be effective, are not achieving outcomes at scale, or are too slow to respond.
- Makes a compelling case for their specific ability to successfully support the focus, goals, and approach they propose, including their track record and resources.
- Provides a clear, logical theory of change that outlines their investment approach and proposed outcomes
- Clearly identifies specific measurable outcomes that will be achieved through their proposed program.
- Identifies the value-added activities, including technical assistance or other services that will be offered to subgrantees to support their success in achieving these outcomes.
- If applicable, clearly identifies how the proposed program addresses the funding priorities described in section I.B.
- If the applicant is a current recipient of, or is under consideration for, other federal funding, clearly describes how the proposed SIF project is distinct from, or will supplement rather than duplicate, other federally funded projects.

For Applicants With a Pre-Identified Intervention, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Demonstrates that their targeted innovations have at least “preliminary” evidence of results, are showing signs of effectiveness, and have the potential for greater scale. Describes the pre-identified strategy, the existing level of evidence for the intervention, the intended goals, and this strategy is a “transformative,” “innovative approach” [as defined in the Overview section of this *Notice*].

For Applicants Without Pre-Identified Interventions, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Describes how the evidence-based or informed models and thus subgrantees will be selected and how current reviews of the landscape demonstrate that there are adequate models with at least preliminary levels of evidence available with the potential to be “transformative” “innovative approach(es)” [as defined in the Overview section of this *Notice*].

## **b) Description of Activities**

### ***Subgrantee Selection***

For All Applicants, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Provides a clear profile of the type of subgrantee organization they hope to fund
- Provides a clear and comprehensive plan for carrying out a competitive subgrantee selection process, including the estimated number or range of subgrant awards that will be made; the estimated range of subgrant amounts; and the criteria that will be used to determine prospective subgrantees’ fit with the applicant’s theory of change and/or successfully contribute to its outcome measures; a general timeline or timeframe outlining when stages of the selection process would be completed. Note: the selection process must be completed within **six to eight** months of grant award.
- Presents a selection process that has a high likelihood of successfully identifying subgrantees that are high-performing as defined in the Operating Model section of this *Notice*, and are positioned to conduct evaluations.

For Applicants With a Pre-Identified Intervention, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Makes a persuasive case for how it will select subgrantees who are well-suited to implement the pre-defined intervention.

For Applicants Without a Pre-Defined Intervention, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Provides a clear articulation of how they will assess applicants for readiness and capacity to implement a rigorous evaluation plan that would achieve moderate or strong levels of evidence over a three to five year period
- Provides a clear articulation of how they will assess applicants for readiness and capacity to implement program growth as a part of their participation in the Social Innovation Fund

- Adequately proposes a means of allocating grant awards so that larger sums are given to those subgrantees with higher levels of evidence to support the growth of their program impact.

### ***Proposal for Evaluation***

For All Applicants, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Describes a reasonable evaluation strategy to ensure that funded program models will achieve at least moderate levels of evidence over their three to five year grant period.
- Explains how they will assess needs for and provide technical assistance to subgrantees as they design, implement, and monitor evaluations of their program models.
- If addressed, describes how they will work with an evaluation partner and what activities this partner will do to support the Social Innovation Fund portfolio. If not, describes the capacity and expertise of staff to successfully support the SIF portfolio.
- Describes an appropriate and detailed budget to support the cost of reasonable evaluation activities that will meet Social Innovation Fund evaluation requirements.

For Applicants With a Pre-Identified Intervention, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Describes the proposed program model that will be evaluated and whether it has the potential to achieve at least a moderate level of evidence of effectiveness during the Social Innovation Fund grant period of three to five years. *Note: In cases where applicants are applying with a pre-identified evidence-based intervention, CNCS will assess the level of evidence.*

For Applicants Without a Pre-Identified Intervention, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

Describes examples of program models that will be evaluated, and whether these models have the potential to achieve at least moderate levels of evidence of effectiveness during their Social Innovation Fund grant period of three to five years.

### ***Proposal to Identify Innovative, More Effective Solutions***

For All Applicants, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Describes the selected issue area being addressed, why the issue is a problem of national or local importance and why the existing solutions are not sufficient, or the gap in the research on effectiveness in tackling the issue or

need.

For Applicants With a Pre-Identified Intervention, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Makes a persuasive case that the solutions it has identified (or will target) are innovative and potentially transformative, as described in the Overview of this *Notice*.

For Applicants Without a Pre-Identified Intervention, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Describes how it will attract and select solutions that are innovative and potentially transformative, as described in the Overview of this *Notice*.

### ***Proposal for Growing Subgrantee Impact***

For All Applicants, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Articulates their theory or approach to growing effective subgrantee program models in alignment with their overall theory of change.
- Provides an appropriate list of characteristics the applicant will use to assess subgrantee capacity for growth.
- Includes a description of how evidence of effectiveness will be used to determine when or how a program is well-situated for growth.
- Describes their means of supporting subgrantee growth through technical assistance or other resources.
- Describes their plans to help subgrantees plan for strategic and effective growth that results in long-term sustainability for the expanded program long beyond the 3-5 year SIF grant period, including specific thoughts on the types of capital that will sustain growth.

## **2. Organizational Capability (40%)**

### **a) History of Competitive Grantmaking**

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Demonstrates experience selecting and awarding competitive grants to nonprofits.
- Demonstrates capacity to undertake the subgrant selection process outlined in their application.

### **b) Experience Growing Program Impact**

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Describes adequate examples of past efforts supporting grantee program growth through replication or expansion.
- Describes adequate resources to support successful subgrantee growth as

proposed.

- Proposes how best practices will be captured and shared, preferably based on successful past efforts.

**c) Evaluation Experience**

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Demonstrates experience in managing and supporting evaluations of program models they have funded in the past.
- Demonstrates the capacity to apply evidence/evaluation results to decision-making and investment strategies.
- Has experience influencing and supporting its grantees to use evidence to improve program performance.
- Demonstrates their staff's capacity (or contracted capacity) to ensure successful evaluation of their subgrantees' program models.

**d) Ability to Provide Program Support and Oversight**

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Describes compelling examples of setting and implementing goals with its current and past grantees.
- Presents a qualified roster of staff members that have the experience and capacity to effectively implement the proposed program. This includes the involvement of management, board members, etc.
- Presents a compelling plan to provide assistance or support to build subgrantee capacity as needed.
- Describes experience operating and overseeing programs comparable to the ones proposed in the identified priority issue area(s) of activity, including specific examples of prior accomplishments and outcomes in these area(s).
- Describes a plan for developing subgrantee performance measurement systems and using these to monitor and improve subgrantee performance
- Describes experience monitoring subgrantees for compliance against programmatic requirements, as well as a sufficient plan monitoring new Social Innovation Fund grantees.
- Proposes an approach to hold both subgrantees and themselves accountable for meeting program goals.

**e) Ability to Provide Financial Support and Oversight**

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

Provides a compelling case that they have the experience and staff capacity to successfully manage the proposed Social Innovation Fund grant program at both the intermediary and subgrantee level from a fiscal perspective.

- Describes a staffing plan that engages staff members with sufficient capacity and experience to be effective and compliant.

- Describes sufficient plans for ensuring compliance with federal guidelines at the intermediary and subgrantee level.
- (If new to federal funding) Provides adequate evidence that they have the means and plan to acquire necessary capacity to ensure compliance.
- Demonstrates that the grant award would generate additional or new private sector funds to meet match requirement.
- Demonstrates a strong capacity to raise additional dollars, beyond intermediary match, to provide to subgrantees, if needed, and a serious commitment to share the fundraising burden of their subgrantees.

**f) Strategy for Sustainability**

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Demonstrates commitment to continue the investment priorities articulated in this application beyond the life of the grant.
- Describes a successful strategy for ensuring subgrantees are positioned to continue evaluation and sustain program growth beyond the grant lifecycle.

**3. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (15%)**

**a) Budget Justification**

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Proposes a reasonable and justifiable budget that will support the capacity necessary to achieve desired outputs and outcomes.
- Presents a budget adequate to successfully support program activities, especially in regard to evaluation, supporting subgrantee program growth, and running a successful subgrantee selection process.
- Demonstrates how the program has or will obtain diverse non-federal resources for program implementation and sustainability.
- (If applicable) Makes a compelling case for higher program costs due to an intention to make subgrants in areas that are significantly philanthropically underserved.
- (If applicable) Explains why, if awarded, they could not meet match requirements unless they apply for and are granted a match reduction (up to 50%). Also describes how the community they are serving is significantly philanthropically underserved as described previously in this *Notice*. CNCS expects to grant match waivers only in extraordinary circumstances.

**b) Description of Match Sources and Capacity**

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Presents a compelling plan for securing the total match commitment for their Social Innovation Fund program.
- Describes adequate plans or efforts to assist subgrantees to secure their required match.

#### **4. Additional Balancing Characteristics and Priorities that will be Considered During the Review Process**

In selecting applicants to receive awards under this *Notice*, CNCS will assess the criteria listed above but will also take balancing criteria, such as geographic and economic factors, and optional funding priorities into consideration. While there are no points assigned for addressing one or more of the optional funding priorities, high scoring applications that address a priority are more likely to be recommended for funding than those that do not.

CNCS staff will assess to what extent the applicant addresses the following optional funding priorities. Applicants that plan to focus on these funding priorities should provide a summary of related activities in this section but it should also be reflected throughout the overall Program Design.

- Describes a program design that targets organizations leveraging a Collective Impact approach as described in the Funding Priorities section of this *Notice*.
- Describes a program design that targets organizations that plan to serve at least one of the following types of beneficiaries as described in the Funding Priorities section of this *Notice*:
  - Opportunity Youth
  - Traditionally Underserved and Underrepresented Geographic Areas and Populations
  - Presidential Initiatives to Expand Access to Opportunity

## **B. Review and Selection Process**

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of considerations. CNCS will engage External and Internal (Staff) Reviewers with relevant knowledge and expertise in social innovation, philanthropy, evidence-based solutions, non-profit evaluation, scale, collective impact, opportunity youth, healthy futures, economic opportunity and youth development to provide insight and input on the eligible applications.

### **1. Selection Factors**

The review and selection process is designed to:

- Identify outstanding eligible applications that demonstrate
  - High alignment with the Selection Criteria
  - Alignment with priorities identified in section *I.B Funding Priorities* of this *Notice*
  - Exemplary track record of administrative operations and programmatic success and
  - Experience with and plans for subgrantee evaluation proposals that will build the level of evidence of effectiveness for each implemented intervention or program design
- Compile a balanced portfolio based on the following characteristics:
  - Geographic representation: As described in the section *I.B Funding Priorities*

of this *Notice*

- Focus Area representation
- Fidelity to innovative models, evidence-based approaches and rigorous evaluation and strategic growth to new populations and locations.

## 2. Stages in the Review and Selection Process

### a) **Compliance Review**

CNCS staff will review all applications to determine compliance with the eligibility requirements identified in section *III.A. Eligible Applicants* and the deadline and completeness requirements identified in section *IV. Application and Submission Information*. The compliance review does not include reading the entire application. Applications that do not meet all compliance criteria will not be considered.

In order to be compliant and advance to the application assessment, an applicant must:

- Be an eligible organization
- Submit an application by the submission deadline
- Submit an application that is complete, in that it contains all required elements and follows the instructions provided in this *Notice* (section *IV.B. Content and Form of Application Submission*)
- Identify itself as either issue-based or geographic-based
- Submit a budget that reflects a federal share of between \$1 million and \$5 million
- Submit a budget that reflects a plan to distribute at least 80 percent of awarded federal funds to subgrantees (note: for further information on this requirement, please see the Budget Instruction in the separate application instructions)
- Demonstrate either cash-on-hand or commitments (or a combination thereof) toward meeting 50 percent of the required first year matching funds, based on the amount of grant funds requested.

### b) **Expert Review**

Expert reviewers will assess applications based on the Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy selection criteria. Each application will be reviewed by at least three expert reviewers. Reviewers will be recruited and selected on the basis of demonstrated expertise in social innovation, growing the impact of successful programs, nonprofit management, program evaluation and/or the focus areas. All expert reviewers are screened for conflicts of interest.

### c) **Post-Expert Review Quality Control**

After the expert review process is complete, CNCS staff will review the results for fairness and consistency. At this stage, some applications may be selected for a Post-Expert Review Quality Control assessment. This additional level of application review will be done by a review panel of External Reviewers who will assess the applications for which significant panel scoring anomalies were identified.

### d) **Internal (Staff) Review**

CNCS staff will assess the applications based on the published Selection Criteria, particularly focusing on applicants' capacity to successfully implement their proposed program in accordance with Social Innovation Fund requirements, strength of community relationships and collaborations, opportunity for scale, potential to impact public discussion, and rigor and sophistication of evidence and evaluation. Based on results from the initial review process and the Post External Review Quality Control, as well as the consideration of the priorities and selection factors, CNCS staff will decide which applications advance to Internal (Staff) Review.

**e) Risk Assessment Evaluation**

CNCS staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility and the quality of its application, and results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions.

If CNCS determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award.

In evaluating risks, CNCS may consider the following:

- Financial stability
- Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in applicable OMB Guidance
- Applicant's record in managing previous CNCS awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
  - timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements
  - if applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
- Information available through OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
  - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)
  - Duns and Bradstreet
  - "Do Not Pay"
- Reports and findings from single audits performed under OMB Circular A-133 and findings of any other available audits
- IRS Tax Form 990
- Applicant organization's annual report
- Publicly available information, including information from the applicant organization's website
- Applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients.

**f) Clarification Process**

Following the review and selection process and risk assessment evaluation, CNCS might ask some applicants to provide clarifying information. CNCS staff uses clarifying information to inform funding recommendations. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. If an organization does not respond by the deadline to a request for clarification, CNCS will remove its applications from consideration. Be prepared to provide documentation of eligibility criteria and other support documentation described in the narrative. CNCS staff may conduct a site visit inspection, as appropriate.

**g) Program Staff Recommendation**

CNCS staff will recommend applications for selection based on the results of the initial review, Post Review Quality Control, Risk Assessment Evaluation, Applicant Clarifications, and the priorities and selection factors stated in this *Notice*.

**h) Selection for Funding**

CNCS seeks a diversified portfolio. The Chief Executive Officer or designee will select the final portfolio based on the staff recommendations, priorities, and selection criteria.

*CNCS reserves the right to change the review and selection process depending on the number of applications received or extenuating circumstances.*

**3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates**

CNCS anticipates announcing the results of this competition in August 2014. Successful applicants will receive an official notification that their application was selected for an award. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The *Notice of Grant Award* signed by the grant officer (or equivalent) is the authorizing document for grant activities, and will be sent at a later date. Unsuccessful applicants will receive a notification that their application was not recommended for funding.

**4. Feedback to Applicants**

Following grant awards, compliant applicants will receive summary comments from the Expert Review. This feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect information that may have been provided during clarification.

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **A. Award Notices**

CNCS will make awards following the grantee selection announcement. CNCS anticipates the awards will be issued in August 2014.

CNCS is not obligated to make any awards as a result of this *Notice*.

An awardee may not expend federal grant funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the *Notice of Grant Award*.

## **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

The *Notice of Grant Award* will be subject to and incorporate the requirements of section 198K of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as well as other applicable sections of the Act. The *Notice of Grant Award* will also incorporate the approved application and budget as part of the binding commitments under any cooperative agreement. Awardees will be subject to the following (as applicable):

- 2 CFR Part 175: Award term for trafficking in persons
- 2 CFR Parts 180 and 2200: Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension
- 2 CFR Part 215 and 45 CFR Part 2543: Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-110)
- 2 CFR Part 220: Cost Principles for Educational Institutions (OMB Circular A-21)
- 2 CFR Part 225: Cost Principles for State, Local and Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87)
- 2 CFR Part 230: Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122)
- 45 CFR Part 2541: Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments
- 45 CFR Part 2545: Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)
- 45 CFR Part 2555: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance
- The Single Audit Act (31 U.S.C. Chapter 75) and OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations  
([http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/a133/a133\\_revised\\_2007.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/a133/a133_revised_2007.pdf))

## **C. Use of Material**

To ensure that materials generated with CNCS funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, CNCS reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so (45 CFR §§ 2543.36; 2541.30).

## **D. Reporting Requirements**

Grantees are required to provide quarterly or bi-annual progress reports and bi-annual financial reports through eGrants, CNCS's web-based grants management system. All grantees must provide quarterly expense reports through the Payment Management System (PMS) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Evaluation reports (interim and final) outlined in approved Subgrantee Evaluation Plans will be submitted to CNCS for review. Final evaluation reports will be made available to the public.

In addition, at the end of the grant period, grantees must submit final financial and progress reports that are cumulative over the entire award period and consistent with the close-out requirements of CNCS's Office of Grants Management. The final reports are due 90 days after the end of the agreement.

Award recipients will be required to report at (<https://www.fsrs.gov/>) on all subawards over \$25,000, and may be required to report on executive compensation for the recipient organization and its subgrantees. Grantees and subgrantees must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See 2 C.F.R. Part 170 ([2 CFR Part 170](#)) for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

While applications will not be evaluated on these criteria, grantees will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are giving CNCS high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, grantees should have policies and practices that address the following five aspects of data quality:

- The data measures what it intends to measure
- The data reported is complete
- The grantee collects data in a consistent manner
- The grantee takes steps to correct data errors
- The grantee actively reviews data before submission.

In addition, CNCS expects intermediaries to hold subgrantees accountable for their progress against agreed-upon indicators of success. The intermediaries will be asked to report subgrantee performance information to CNCS. As part of knowledge collection and dissemination efforts, all or a portion of reports submitted may be made available to the public.

## **E. Other Responsibilities Under the Cooperative Agreement**

CNCS will require Social Innovation Fund grantees to develop detailed plans for selecting subgrantees and for evaluating their funded interventions. These plans will be reviewed and approved by CNCS. Grantees also will develop final detailed plans for growing subgrantee program impact that will be reviewed and approved by CNCS.

### **Subgrantee Selection Plan**

The subgrantee selection plan will include the following:

- The estimated number or range of subgrant awards that will be made
- The estimated range of subgrant award amounts
- A description of:
  - How key subgrant eligibility criteria required by the Statute will be determined, particularly

- the level of evidence currently established for proposed subgrantee programs
- The proposed review and selection process
- Who will review grant applications and how the process will ensure appropriate conflict of interest policies are in place.

Subgrant eligibility criteria include at a minimum:

- A description of the initiative the community organization plans to replicate or expand, and how the initiative relates to the issue area(s) identified by the intermediary
- Data on the measurable outcomes the community organization has improved, and information on the measurable outcomes the community organization seeks to improve by replicating or expanding a proven initiative or supporting a new initiative, which shall be among the measurable outcomes that the eligible entity identified in the eligible entity's application, in accordance with subsection
- An identification of the community in which the community organization proposes to operate
- A description of the evidence-based decision making strategies the community organization uses to improve the measurable outcomes, including—
  - A description of how the community organization uses data to analyze and improve its initiatives
  - Specific evidence of how the community organization will meet the requirements for providing matching funds
  - A description of how the community organization will sustain the replicated or expanded initiative after the conclusion of the subgrant period and
  - Any other information the intermediary may require.

### **Portfolio Evaluation Strategy and Subgrantee Evaluation Plans**

The evaluation strategy and individual evaluation plans will address key questions, such as the following:

- What are the specific questions the evaluation(s) intend(s) to answer?
- How will fidelity of implementation be assessed and analyzed?
- What type of impact research design(s) (e.g., randomized control trial, quasi-experimental) do you hope to conduct? Why is this evaluation design appropriate for the program's stage of development, and what useful information do you hope to gain? How will the proposed research designs achieve the moderate or strong level of evidence over three to five years?
- What is the timeline and estimated budget for the evaluation(s)?
- Who will conduct the evaluation(s) and how will the process you will employ maintain independence and ensure high quality reports?
- How will you ensure benchmarks and baselines?
- What is your plan to publically share progress along the way?

### **Plan for Growing Subgrantee Impact**

The plan for growing program impact will document each intermediary's approach and goals for subgrantee growth including:

- Existing evidence that supports the plan for growing impact
- How growth is connected to the subgrantees' plan to improve its level of evidence;
- The estimated number of additional people expected to benefit from the program each year due to growth
- Which specific new locations or populations will be reached
- The strategies subgrantees will utilize to generate growth in the number of people reached, e.g., through expansions in current locations, replication of the program model to additional locations or other methods that do not require physical expansion (e.g. expanded use of technology, adoption of wide-scale policy mandates, etc.)
- The services, including training and technical assistance, the intermediary will provide to subgrantees to facilitate the planned growth and
- How the intermediary will track and assess actual growth of impact as measured compared to the estimates included in their plan.

SIF intermediaries also must:

- Identify and document effective practices and lessons learned in order to share those lessons widely
- Participate in a Social Innovation Fund learning community that will work collaboratively to capture and share lessons and insights within the network and social sector to inform the work of the larger philanthropic, nonprofit, and public sectors
- Meet as necessary with their CNCS program officer, or other staff or consultants
- Provide ongoing information about and access to subgrantees and match funders
- Encourage subgrantees and match funders to provide information about program progress and to participate in SIF network events and conversations
- Require attendance from senior-level leadership and SIF project staff at annual meeting
- Provide copies of intermediate and final evaluation findings [to CNCS?] before making those findings public.

## **F. Continuation Funding Information and Requirements**

As mentioned in section *II.C. Award Information*, CNCS will require all Social Innovation Fund grantees to participate in a continuation process in order to receive funding for activities in years 2 through 5. Funding is contingent upon appropriations.

Grantees will submit a continuation request in response to the review criteria below. In addition to the continuation submission, the review will also be based the progress reports, the federal financial report (FFR), Subgrantee Evaluation Plans (SEPs), and Scaling Plans; and CNCS staff knowledge of the grant program. To be approved for continued funding, grantees must demonstrate satisfactory performance with respect to key program goals and requirements, as well as compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant. The review criteria are:

### **1. Subgrantee Selection and Continuation**

- a) Grantee has successfully completed its subgrantee selection process in alignment with the approved subgrantee selection plan, including ensuring that all subgrantees had at least preliminary levels of evidence
  - b) Grantee has successfully completed its subgrantee continuation review process and made decisions based on subgrantee performance, spending, and progress towards evaluation goals (as applicable)
  - c) Grantee has a reasonable plan for use of any funds recouped through the subgrantee continuation review process (as applicable)
- 2. Program Evaluation**
- a) Grantee has secured (or is making sufficient progress towards securing) approval of its subgrantee evaluation plans
  - b) Grantee is in compliance with the evaluation requirement outlined in its governing *Notice*:
    - i. 2010 Grantees: Must identify the existing level of evidence for each intervention/program model being implemented and build on that level of evidence, reaching moderate or strong whenever possible
    - ii. 2011 Grantees and beyond: Must propose evaluation plans for SIF-funded interventions/program models that will reach moderate or strong levels of evidence of effectiveness by the end of the three or five year grant period
  - c) Grantee demonstrates adequate progress towards subgrantee evaluation plan implementation, satisfactorily addressing challenges where they have occurred
- 3. Growing Subgrantee Impact**
- a) Grantee has an approved scaling plan
  - b) Grantee has made appropriate progress towards its goals for scaling or replicating subgrantees, or otherwise building their capacity for growth
- 4. Ensuring and Maintaining Compliance with Grant Requirements and Laws**
- a) Grantee has provided adequate training to subgrantees on grant requirements
  - b) Grantee is adequately overseeing and monitoring its subgrantees
  - c) Grantee has effectively utilized (or ensured the utilization of) grant funds at the grantee and subgrantee level
  - d) Grantee and subgrantee are on track to meeting their match requirements on an annual basis
  - e) Grantee has taken appropriate action in response to subgrantee non-compliance (e.g., not raising the required annual match)
  - f) Grantee has communicated program implementation challenges with its program officer and has adequately addressed them
  - g) Grantee has been responsive to CNCS requests for information including timely submission of financial, evaluation and progress reports, Subgrantee Evaluation Plans and continuation applications
- 5. Proposed Changes to the Program Plan and Budget**
- a) Grantee has presented reasonable justification for proposed changes to the program plan or budget

Grantees will be held accountable for meeting these expectations and, likewise should have processes in place to assess and monitor their subgrantees' progress towards these expectations. Should a subgrantee or grantee fail to meet these expectations, consequences will ensue and may include the return of grant or subgrantee funds or reduction and/or refusal of future annual awards.

## VII. Agency Contacts

The *Notice* and Application Instructions are online available at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities>.

The TTY number is 800-833-3722.

For more information or a printed copy of related material(s), call (202) 606-3223 or send a note to [innovation@cns.gov](mailto:innovation@cns.gov).

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, call the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677. National Service Hotline hours are Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time. You can also use this link: <https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/answers/list>. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the name of the *Notice* to which you are applying.

The mailing address for submitting application material is:

Corporation for National and Community Service  
ATT: Office of Grants Policy and Operations/Social Innovation Fund Application  
1201 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20525

## VIII. Other Information

### A. Technical Assistance

CNCS will host technical assistance calls and/or workshops to answer questions about the funding opportunity and about eGrants and strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. The schedule of calls and call-in information will be posted on CNCS's website: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities>.

### B. Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act

For more information regarding the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, please go to: [http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/09\\_0331\\_recovery\\_summary.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/09_0331_recovery_summary.pdf).

### C. Re-Focusing of Funding

CNCS reserves the right to re-focus program dollars in the event of disaster or other compelling needs for service.

