

# Social Innovation Fund

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

In the past two years, the Social Innovation Fund has awarded \$95 million to 16 grantmaking intermediaries. These grantees have strong track records of identifying and growing high-performing nonprofit organizations and represent the diversity of the social sector. Through open competitions conducted across the U.S., they have to date selected nearly 150 promising nonprofits with evidence-based solutions to critical social challenges. This funding has yielded \$250 million in private and non-federal commitments for matches at the intermediary and community-based nonprofit levels. Brief descriptions of the 16 intermediaries are provided below.

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

– President Barack Obama

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

– First Lady Michelle Obama

## Economic Opportunity

- **Jobs for the Future, Inc.** (2010 grantee: \$3.85 million per year), through the National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS), is expanding its targeted training and technical assistance to at least 23,000 low-income individuals over three years while also addressing the critical skill needs of more than 1,000 employers. These funds will increase economic opportunities for disadvantaged workers and job seekers through investments in at least 20 regional workforce collaboratives that partner with employers to identify jobs and career pathways in high-growth industries.
- **Local Initiatives Support Corporation** (2010 grantee: \$4.2 million per year) is expanding its Financial Opportunity Center (FOC) model to six new cities and 7,500 total participants. FOCs integrate workforce development and asset-building strategies to help low-income families improve household finances and raise credit scores.
- **Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City** (2010 grantee: \$5.7 million per year) and the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) are replicating five promising anti-poverty programs originally piloted by CEO in New York City. By taking these models to seven additional cities, CEO will advance the education, employment and financial savings of an additional 18,000 low-income adults and families.
- **NCB Capital Impact** (2011 grantee: \$1 million per year), through its Stewardship Capacity Fund (SCF), will invest in seven to 10 community-based non-profits to grow and replicate “shared equity homeownership” (SEH) programs that enable local

organizations to more effectively manage public investment in affordable homeownership. This program will directly serve some 300 low-income families per year.

- **REDF** (2010 grantee: \$1.5 million per year) is creating job opportunities for at least 2,500 Californians with multiple barriers to employment, including disengaged youths, homeless individuals, ex-offenders and those with severe mental illness. REDF will select six sustainable nonprofit social enterprises in low-income communities throughout the state that have the potential to be scalable employment vehicles.

## Healthy Futures

- **AIDS United** (2010 grantee: \$2.1 million per year; formerly National AIDS Fund) supports innovative strategies being pursued by 10 organizations throughout the United States that will increase access to care and improve health outcomes for at least 3,500 low-income individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The project will inform implementation of the White House National HIV/AIDS Strategy and offer lessons about reducing barriers to care for a broad range of chronic disease sufferers.
- **Corporation for Supportive Housing** (2011 grantee: \$1.15 million per year) will expand and replicate models that combine health, housing and social services to improve outcomes for homeless individuals with complex health needs who frequently use multiple public crisis systems. This program will invest in as many as 12 community-based organizations and serve approximately 400 individuals per year.

- **Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky** (2010 grantee: \$1 million per year) aims to improve access to needed health services, reduce health risks and disparities, and promote health equality for residents in low-income and underserved communities in Kentucky. The program will invest in six to 10 organizations with innovative strategies and expects to reach some 5,500 Kentuckians.
- **Missouri Foundation for Health** (2010 grantee: \$1 million per year) is investing in seven organizations working in low-income communities across the state to reduce the risk factors and prevalence of two preventable causes of chronic disease and death: tobacco use and obesity. The project draws on an integrated community change model and is expected to reach 1,000 residents in three areas of Missouri.
- **U.S. Soccer Foundation** (2011 grantee: \$1 million per year) will support the expansion and replication of Soccer for Success (SFS), an after-school program that improves the health of low-income youths by reducing obesity through physical activity and nutrition education. By investing in 12 organizations in selected cities across the country, the Foundation expects to reach 12,000 youths per year.

## Youth Development

- **Mile High United Way** (2011 grantee: \$1.8 million per year) will fund programs that engage volunteers to improve third grade literacy rates in 10-15 rural and urban communities across the state of Colorado, eventually reaching 2,000 children per year. This program will engage other community United Ways and will build upon a strong state movement for education reform that has bipartisan support from Colorado's Governor, Lieutenant Governor and state legislature.
- **New Profit Inc.** (2010 grantee: \$5 million per year) will partner with six innovative youth-focused nonprofit organizations having sound evidence bases to help young people better navigate the increasingly complex pathway from high

school to college and productive employment. The project will expand the reach of these nonprofits to improve the lives of nearly 8,000 young people in low-income communities throughout the country.

- **The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation** (2010 grantee: \$10 million per year) is combining large grants, strategic business planning, rigorous evaluation and capital aggregation to increase the scale and impact of nine youth development organizations in communities of need across the country. These organizations aim to improve the educational skills and workforce readiness of approximately 100,000 additional economically disadvantaged young people over three years.
- **United Way for Southeastern Michigan** (2011 grantee: \$2 million per year) will invest in 15-20 community-based organizations with innovative programs to improve early childhood learning outcomes for children in 10 needy communities throughout greater Detroit. At scale, this program is projected to reach some 6,000 children per year.
- **Venture Philanthropy Partners** (2010 grantee: \$2 million per year) is investing in six nonprofit organizations in the Washington D.C. National Capital Region to build a powerful network addressing the education and employment needs of low-income and vulnerable youth ages 14 to 24. This network will directly serve an estimated 20,000 youth.

## Multi-Issue

- **United Way of Greater Cincinnati** (2010 grantee: \$1 million per year) and the Strive Partnership are leading a collaborative community effort to address the needs of low-income children and youth from "cradle to career" in the Greater Cincinnati area. They will invest in nine organizations that focus on early education, mentoring, literacy, college access, and career pathways to reach 1,500 additional young people throughout the region.

## EMBRACING INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

The Social Innovation Fund employs an innovative approach that positions the federal government to be a catalyst for public-private collaboration that generates both direct and widespread impact. This model is distinguished by four key characteristics:

- Reliance on outstanding existing grantmaking "intermediaries" to select high-impact community organizations rather than building new government infrastructure.
- The requirement that each federal dollar granted be matched up to 3:1 with money from private and other non-federal sources, thereby increasing the return on taxpayer dollars and strengthening local support.

- Emphasis on rigorous evaluations of program results to improve accountability and build a stronger marketplace of organizations with evidence of impact.
- Effective leverage of the grant program through supplementary initiatives that capture knowledge and advance social innovation more generally in the nonprofit sector.

*For more information, visit the Corporation for National and Community Service's Social Innovation Fund website at [www.NationalService.gov/Innovation](http://www.NationalService.gov/Innovation)*

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