

***Unedited Transcript of Third Social Innovation Fund
Technical Assistance Call of March 16, 2010, at 12:30 p.m. Eastern Time***

Corporation Note: This is an unedited transcript of the third Social Innovation Fund (SIF) technical assistance call. Potential applicants should refer to the NOFA as the primary source of information. An audio recording of this call can be accessed by dialing the following number: 800-884-1527. The audio recording will be available through April 8, 2010.

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time, all participants are in a listen only mode until the question and answer session of today's conference.

At that time, you may press star 1 if you'd like to ask a question. I would like to inform all participants the call is being recorded. If you have any objections, please disconnect at this time.

I now would like to turn the call over to Ms. Marta Urquilla. Ma'am you may go ahead and begin.

Marta Urquilla: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Marta Urquilla and I am the Senior Advisor for Social Innovation with the Corporation for National and Community Service.

I'm joined today by Associate General Counsel, Doug Hilton, Director of the Office of Grants Management, Peg Rosenberry, and Strategic Advisor for Social Innovation, Kent Mitchell, each also with the corporation.

Thank you all for joining this third technical assistance or TA call with respect to the corporation's social innovation fund, also known as, the SIF.

Before we open this call to questions, I want to remind you that a fourth TA call will be held this Friday, March 19 from 1:00 to 2:00 pm Eastern Time. That call will not be a general TA call, but will address how to complete a SIF application in the E-Grant system.

On the call, corporation staff will walk through a Power Point that will be available on the Corporation's Web site 24 hours before the call.

With only a few weeks left until the application deadline, we urge you to interpret Friday's TA call as a signal about where you should be focusing your attention.

At this point, all applicants should be fairly far along in their process. We expect intermediary applicants to be familiar with the E-Grant system, including how to trouble shoot problems, to have a well developed draft of their application narrative and aligned budget and to be in final conversations and negotiations about how to meet the 50% match requirement.

Accordingly, given our expectations, most of our technical assistance following today's call, will center on what we perceive are the most challenging pieces of the SIF application process, including one, completing an adequate budget, and two, meeting the match requirement.

Although we won't be able to answer all budget asked questions, we have established these two areas as our focus points for TA moving forward.

General inquiries are still welcome, at innovation@cnf.gov, but applicants should not expect significant new FAQ's on topics other than budget and match.

We do plan to release a new FAQ later this week, so please continue to check the Web site for updates.

As an example of the kind of TA that we'll continue to provide, I would like to address two topics on which we recently received questions. The first topic relates to a number of questions we've received from applicants proposing to provide more resources than the required dollar for dollar match, that is called for under the Kennedy Serve America Act and NOFA.

On this point let me say that this is a question we are more than happy to answer. It's not many times that we can provide guidance on how to spend more matching dollars than the grant requires.

These applicants who are willing to provide funding beyond the minimum match requirements can do so in two basic ways. The first is simply to show a greater grantee share in their proposed budget as part of their application.

Since the only absolute requirement related to matching funds in the proposed budget is that total matching funds be at least equal to the total federal funds request, applicants are free to propose providing matching funds at a higher rate and are free to distribute that funding anywhere in their proposed budgets.

However, if the specific purpose of providing additional matching funds is to help future sub-grantees to meet their matching requirements, we recommend that you do not put that funding into your budgets.

Additional funding placed in the sub-grantee's portion of your budget, will expand the amount of a sub-grantee can award. But each one of those sub-grants will have a full dollar per dollar matching requirement.

In addition, providing sub-grantees with funding to help them meet their matching requirements will not be a valid cost for its intermediary.

Instead, we recommend that you disclose in your application narrative that you intend to assist sub-grantees in meeting their match requirements and that you actually do that in the funding stream that is outside the scope of your SIF grant.

In this way, you can provide additional resources to your sub-grantees without imposing additional fund raising burdens on them.

The second topic relates to questions about whether grantees should budget for 12 months of activity in their first grant period or 18 months? The answer is that first year budget should include 12 months of operating costs for the intermediary, plus amounts for one full year of sub-grantee operations.

Practically, this means intermediaries will have 12 months from the time of award to spend their funding and sub-grantees will have 12 months from the time they receive their award.

We expect continuing awards to SIF intermediaries to be made by September 2011.

We hope that this TA and our other efforts to date have been helpful. We've certainly seen an evolution in the questions we've received with many potential applicants moving beyond questions of eligibility, to tackle questions about how to best showcase their competencies and develop a SIF program that will result in greater evidence about what works and higher impacts on targeted low income communities.

We've been tremendously excited by the collaboration this competition is stimulating and we encourage all applicants to work diligently and make their best case possible in this final push toward the April 8 deadline.

For those applicants that are still struggling with questions about eligibility, I just want to reiterate, that this SIF competition is designed to select the best intermediaries with those existing grant making institutions are eligible partnerships that will then competitively select sub-grantees, non-profit community organizations within six months of award.

If you're a non-profit community organization, you can use part of an application as a competitively pre-selected sub-grantee. Otherwise, we encourage you to take some time between now and July, the expected month of SIF award, to undertake a process of self evaluation in preparation for a potential sub-grant opportunity.

Non-profit community organizations are the end recipients of at least 80% of federal funds, but they not the targeted audience for this grant competition at this point in time.

With that said, operator, I'd like to now open the call to questions.

Coordinator: Thank you. We'd like to begin the question and answer session. If you'd like to ask a question, please press star 1. Please unmute your phone and record your name clearly when prompted. Your name is required to introduce your question.

To withdraw your request, please press star 2. One moment please, for the first question.

(Stacey Wordy) your line is open.

(Stacey Wordy): Hi. I'm wondering if you're accepting letters of applicants - letters of support for applicants?

Marta Urquilla: Hi (Stacey). We - the only required attachment is the letter of confirming the match commitment. Now, if applicants choose to provide other materials, they will not be considered in the review.

(Stacey Wordy): Okay. Thank you.

Coordinator: (Carolyn Mansfield) your line is open.

(Carolyn Mansfield): Hi, this is (Carolyn Mansfield) from the Endeavor Group. I have a question about the supplemental material that's permissible under organizational capacity and they're in another - in the applicant's track record, you identified that we can provide Web links to recent reports that are published and unpublished.

Is it possible to provide these through a secure, like FTP site, where we can upload all of that information or is it - did you have something else in mind?

Marta Urquilla: We don't have anything in mind, other than it be accessible on the Web.

(Carolyn Mansfield): Okay. Okay. Are those the only areas that you identify NOFA that will permit supplemental materials?

Marta Urquilla: Yeah, the only supplemental materials we're requesting is the match letter and the material supporting your track record of evaluation.

(Carolyn Mansfield): Okay.

Marta Urquilla: And I just want to go back to the first question. I actually don't think that the grant system will allow you to upload additional materials for the SIF competition.

(Carolyn Mansfield): Right, just provide the Web link within the narrative?

Marta Urquilla: Right. And so the match letter is - just so everyone is clear, those get sent to an email address, sifapplication@cns.gov and you should properly identify your ID number, as instructed in the NOFA.

(Carolyn Mansfield): Okay. Thank you. That's my question.

Coordinator: (Lisa) from Seattle, Washington your line is open.

(Lisa): Hi. Our question was addressed first by (Stacey).

Coordinator: Thank you. Again if you'd like to ask a question, please press star 1. (Angela Vancraft) your line is open.

(Angela Vancraft): Hi. I wanted to ask a question about the budget form. Are we to use the SF424 Budget Information Non-Construction Program Form for the budget or some other type of form template?

Peg Rosenberry: This is Peg Rosenberry. The information on the budget, you will enter into E-Grants, so it's not really a form. When you enter it, you will be entering basically a budget narrative that will populate an abbreviated budget form that becomes the 424 Budget Form.

But you're not actually writing into a form at all. You're doing it all electronically on the Web.

(Angela Vancraft): Okay. So I will just pull together based upon the format that you've laid out in the proposal, just a narrative and it will automatically populate the form SF424?

Peg Rosenberry: What you will do is you will log into our E-Grant System and there is a segment, a section in it where you would enter your budget.

(Angela Vancraft): Right.

Peg Rosenberry: And it requires you to - there's a line for personnel and it'll ask you to put in the title of the position and so on and you just follow the instructions in the NOFA and use the E-Grant System.

And you can hear more about that in Friday's call as well.

(Angela Vancraft): Will do. Thank you.

Coordinator: (Allison Bankin) your line is open.

(Allison Bankin): Hi. A quick question regarding the match. If we're to identify a specific set of funds for the match at application time and have additional funds coming in at a later time, but prior to the grant starting or at the same time of the grant starting, can we change the source of our matching funds? Do you guys care where it's coming from?

Marta Urquilla: What we care about at the time of the deadline, is that 50% of the match has been met, either through commitments or cash on hand.

(Allison Bankin): Right.

Marta Urquilla: And if you make it to the end of the line and you're one of the groups selected when we get to negotiation, we'll look more closely at where you are with the match at that point.

But, to be into - to get into the review in this competition, you have to come with 50% of the match in your application.

(Allison Bankin): Right. We understand that, we just wanted - because we were going to be using cash on hand, but we have some prospects over the next couple of months and we just wanted to be sure that should those come through, you know, we can move which pot it's coming out of, as long as, it meets all the criteria?

Marta Urquilla: Right. I think that we're - what we're saying is, that we're focused on the amount level that's matched in time for the deadline. And again, if we get to that point with you, if you were to be selected as a finalist, then we would look at the match again and we're not going to, you know, we're not going to be telling you where the sources need to be or asking you to lock those in. We're - we just want to be assured that you're going to come with at least 50% of the match on hand.

(Allison Bankin): Okay. That's all I need. Thanks.

Coordinator: (Liz Jones) your line is open.

(Liz Jones): Oh, thank you. I just - I'm proposing a mix of pre-selected grant recipients and non-profits who will be selected through a special grant cycle in the second half of the year.

I just wonder if you could give a little more detail on how we focus on evidence for those - it's very clear how we focus on the evidence of pre-selected grant recipients.

What I'm not sure about, is how we deal with the evidence pieces of the application, when it's for a grant cycle that has not yet commenced and where we don't have finalists?

Marta Urquilla: So what we want to know is retrospectively what your track record and what your approach has been with respect to using evidence based decision making in your grant making.

And so, that we need to know, whether you're coming with pre-selected sub-grantees or you're going to select yours post award through a competitive sub-grant competition.

If you're coming with pre-selected sub-grantees, than clearly you have to also be prepared to justify why they were selected and why they're in your application.

So you will need to address their evidence level in your narrative. But what we're expecting in terms of any competitions held post award, is that you clearly have a demonstrated track record and are comfortable and familiar with this approach to investing and that you have a clear plan about how you are going to source and identify those sub-grantees for investment post award, with respect to their evidence level.

So either way, it doesn't change. I mean, I think you - if you are coming with pre-selected sub-grantees, we're expecting that you have conducted a competitive process to identify them. And you'll need to be able to

substantiate and justify that in your application, how you arrived at deciding on those sub-grantees and we would expect that that process would reveal how you looked at evidence and will tell us by who you've put in your portfolio, how you're assessing evidence level in terms of your selection process.

(Liz Jones): Thank you.

Coordinator: (Amanda Lawrence) your line is open.

(Amanda Lawrence): Yes. I have a question about the sub-grantee match. If a non-profit - this is an example we're to provide \$100,000 and we matched with another \$100,000, would the non-profit have to come up with new money for an additional \$100,000 or would they be able to use existing money?

That question comes down to, is this a double match for the sub-grantee?

Marta Urquilla: Yeah it's...

Doug Hilton: A sub-grantee that receives a grant - this is Doug Hilton from the Office of General Counsel. Anybody who receives a grant from a SIF intermediary, as a sub-grantee, has an independent dollar per dollar matching requirement on the amount that they receive as a sub-grant.

So in your - I wasn't sure in your hypothetical, whether that person was receiving a \$100,000 award or a \$200,000 award, but whichever it is, the full amount of that award is going to have to be matched by that sub-grantee.

(Amanda Lawrence): Okay. If they received 100 from the SIF grant and \$100,000 from us, meaning Trident United Way, would they then have to come up with \$200,000?

Greg Hilton: This is part of what Marta was talking about at the beginning of the call. That's going to depend on exactly how it is that you're structuring what it is that you're doing.

If what you've done is, in essence awarded them a \$200,000 grant, which has a higher investment from your matching funds, then yes, they will have to match \$200,000.

If what you gave them was a \$100,000 SIF grant and you are independently in a separate funding stream, not part of your SIF grant program also assisting them in meeting their match requirement, that match requirement would be the \$100,000 that they have to come up with. And the funding that you're distributing to them, so long as it's not federal funds, would be available for them to meet their match requirements.

(Amanda Lawrence): Okay. Thank you.

Marta Urquilla: And just one point. So as long as it's not federal fund or your SIF match that you've gotten from private sources.

(Amanda Lawrence): Okay.

Greg Hilton: Yeah, in other words, anything you do to help a sub-recipient or sub-grantee meet their match requirement, has to be a completely separate financial stream. It cannot be part of your SIF program at all.

(Amanda Lawrence): Okay. Thank you.

Coordinator: (Carolyn Mansfield) your line's open.

(Carolyn Mansfield): Hi. I was hoping - this is (Carolyn Mansfield) from the Endeavor Group. I was hoping you could provide some more clarity around the semiannual reporting requirements for the intermediary and sub-grantee? We're just trying to get a sense of what resources we might need to manage any award and want to be sure we can consider those in terms of fiscal management and reporting on outcomes?

Marta Urquilla: So we might have multiple answers to this, but one thing I will say, is that - that's the minimum reporting requirement that we expect grantees to have and it is quite possible that when we select our finalists and engage in negotiations with them, that we will revise those requirements.

Peg Rosenberry: And from that - this is Peg Rosenberry again. From the financial prospective, you will be completing one of those, if you're familiar with them, the standard Federal Financial Report, which requires you to indicate how much funding you've expended of federal funds during the semiannual period and how much you've expended of your match funds during that period.

(Carolyn Mansfield): Okay.

Peg Rosenberry: And there may be other reporting requirements related to your program requirements meeting your objectives and so on.

(Carolyn Mansfield): Okay. Thank you.

Coordinator: And at this time, I show now further questions.

Marta Urquilla: Okay. Well, thank you for those questions and on behalf of the corporation we thank you all again for your interest in the social innovations fund and for all of the work that you do so well in your communities and that - the effort you've already put into your applications.

Information on how to access the transcript and audio recording of this call will be posted on the corporation's Web site soon. We encourage you to visit the Web site for further updates and we hope you'll join us this Friday, March 19, for 1:00 to 2:00 pm Eastern Time for the TA call on "How to Complete a SIF Application in E-Grant".

Thank you and have a good afternoon.

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