

Social Innovation Fund 2012 Competition

Overview: Evaluation and Evidence

February, 2012

Agenda

- **Introduction to the Social Innovation Fund (SIF)**
- **SIF Evaluation Overview**
 - **Role of Evaluation and Evidence in SIF**
 - **Program Requirements**
 - **Application Components**
- **Question and Answer Period**

Review of SIF: The Program's Purpose

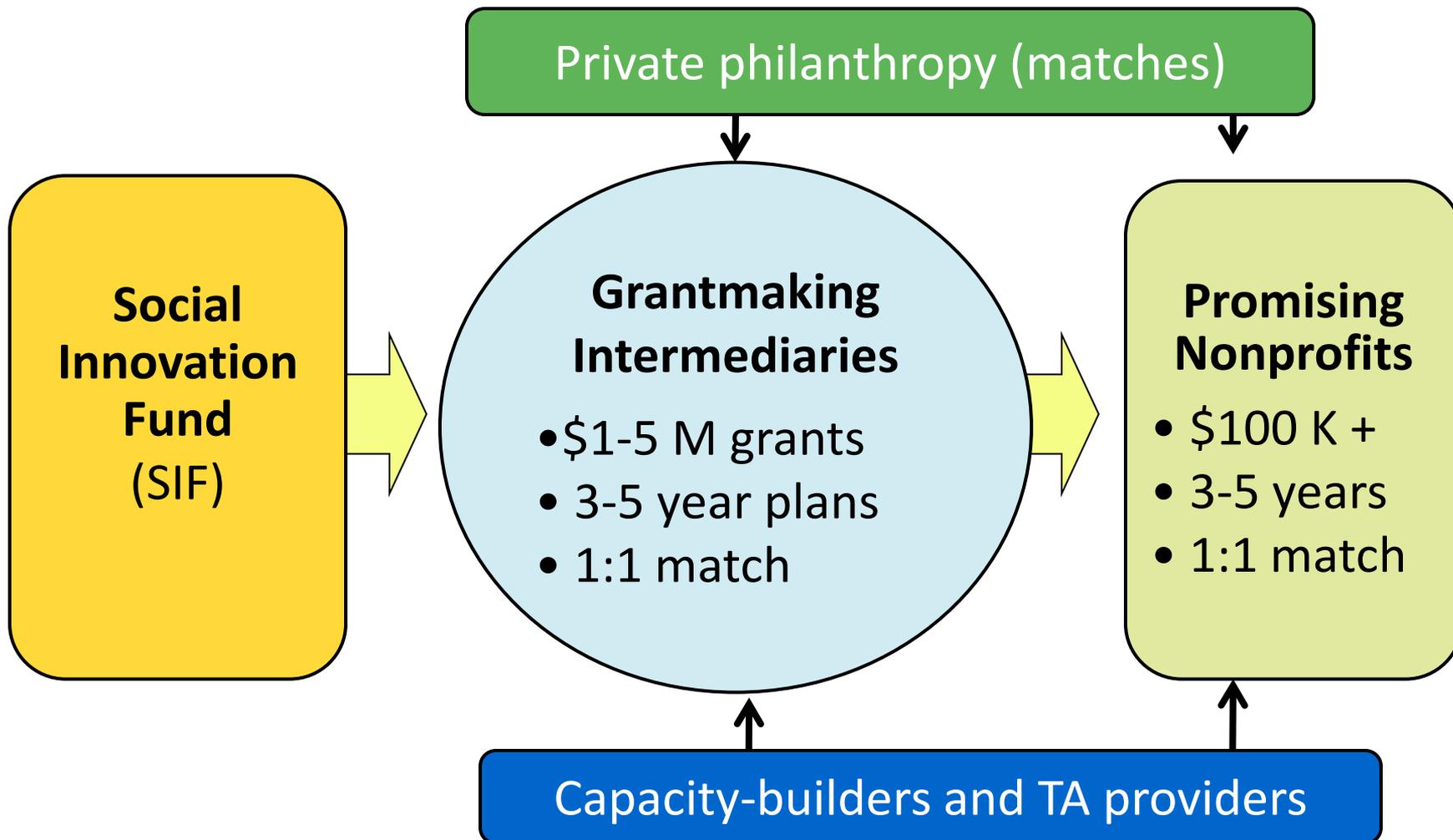
The Social Innovation Fund is a **bold effort** to **advance the vision** of widely-accessible, high-impact solutions that help people and low-income communities.

A program of the CNCS, it is one of the Administration's five "**tiered-evidence initiatives**" based on the principles of social innovation.

It's purpose is:

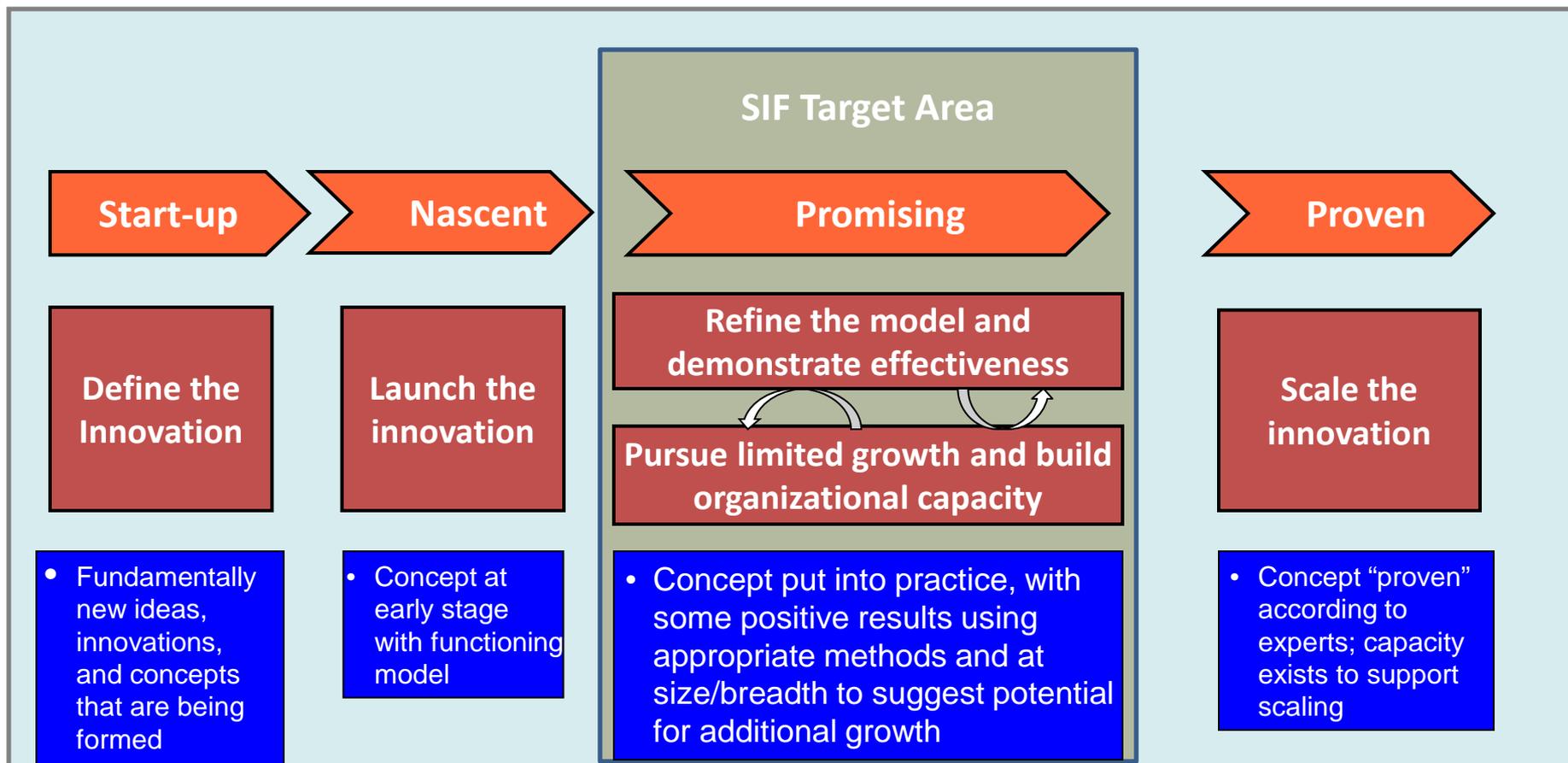
- To **improve the lives** of people in low-income communities
- By **mobilizing public and private resources** to grow **innovative community solutions** with compelling **evidence of results**
- In three areas of priority need: economic opportunity; youth development; and healthy futures.

Grant Program Structure



Review of SIF: Program Model's "Stage" Focus

The Social Innovation Fund targets "promising" solutions due to high risks of earlier stages and high funding requirements of "proven" stage.



Role Evidence and Evaluation in the SIF

Reliance on valid evidence is a fundamental tenet of the Social Innovation Fund, which employs evidence and evaluation in two primary ways:

1) To select the best intermediaries and subgrantees

- Intermediaries: previous track records of using evidence to drive impact;
Subgrantees: promising program models with at least “preliminary” evidence of results

2) To grow the body of evidence about which program models actually work

- Both intermediaries and subgrantees commit to increase evidence base through rigorous subgrantee evaluation plans for each program model; commitment to achieve “moderate” or “strong”

SIF Evaluation: SIF Levels of Evidence

Preliminary

Evidence from studies that is based on a reasonable hypothesis supported by research findings.

Minimum level of evidence required to receive SIF funding

Moderate

Evidence from studies that can support causal conclusions but have limited generalizability or studies with high external validity but moderate internal validity.

Strong

Evidence from studies that support causal conclusions and, that in total, include enough of a range of participants and settings to support scaling up to the state, regional, or national level.

For more information and examples of qualifying studies, see pgs. 9-10 in the NOFA.

SIF Evaluation: Intermediary Program Requirements

- 1. Select subgrantees with at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness**
- 2. Execute systematic evaluation activities to increase evidence base**
 - Develop an overall ***evaluation strategy*** for their portfolios;
 - Work with subgrantees to develop individual ***subgrantee evaluation plans*** for each funded program model that will measure and increase its evidence base. These plans must be approved by CNCS. ***Implement individual subgrantee evaluation plans and report*** progress and results to CNCS;
 - Provide ***evaluation capacity building and technical assistance*** to their subgrantees; and,
 - ***Collaborate*** with CNCS throughout their grant to review and strengthen their strategies and plans and ensure appropriate implementation and reporting of each plan.
- 3. Grow impact of program models through expansion or replication**

SIF Evaluation: Applicant Selection Criteria

- 1. Subgrantee Selection:**
10% of Application
- 2. Proposal for Evaluation:**
15% of Application
- 3. Evaluation Experience:**
15% of Application
- 4. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy of numbers 1 & 4:**
15% of Application

SIF Evaluation: Applicant's Subgrantee Selection

Section II: Program Design
Part B: Subgrantee Selection
Value: 10% of Application

Pg. 35 of the NOFA: Applicants must describe the process by which they will identify and competitively select their nonprofit community organization subgrantees in their targeted geographies. Specifically, applicants must describe how their competitive subgrant selection process will ensure a portfolio of high quality subgrantees with at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness in the program model they intend to implement.

Please note: in line with purpose and goals of the Social Innovation Fund, the level of evidence demonstrated by subgrantees will be a key criterion, and larger sums should be allocated to organizations with higher levels of evidence.

In assessing applications, expert reviewers will examine the degree to which the applicant clearly describes and convincingly addresses the narrative guidelines provided. Specifically, reviewers will be using the criteria for Evaluation Experience located on page 20.

SIF Evaluation: Applicant's Proposal for Evaluation

Section II: Program Design

Part B: Proposal for Evaluation

Value: 15% of Application

Pg. 36 of the NOFA: Applicants should describe the initial approach and overall plan for evaluating the program models anticipated for inclusion in their Social Innovation Fund subgrantee portfolios. As stated in section I. J, all subgrantees are expected to achieve at least moderate levels of evidence by the end of their three to five year grant period. CNCS does not expect that applicants will have a formalized evaluation plan at the time of application, and will work with awarded grantees to finalize and approve their plans throughout their grant period.

Please respond to each of the five bullets points in this section. Please note the section devoted to your budget.

In assessing applications, expert reviewers will examine the degree to which the applicant clearly describes and convincingly addresses the narrative guidelines provided. Specifically, reviewers will be using the criteria for Proposal for Evaluation located on page 22.

SIF Evaluation: Applicant's Evaluation Experience

Section III: Organizational Capacity

Part C: Evaluation Experience

Value: 15% of Application

Pgs. 37-38 of the NOFA: Program evaluation is a critical element of the Social Innovation Fund. Applicants should provide specific examples of their experience with evaluation management and support as well as the ways in which they have applied evidence in their decision-making.

Please respond to each of the five bullets points in this section.

Review criteria for Evaluation Experience is located on pages 20-21.

SIF Evaluation: Applicant's Budget

Section IV: Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Part A: Budget Justification

Value: Part of 15% of Application

Pg. 39 of NOFA: Applicants must provide explanation and/or justification for the various budget items. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Provide a brief and succinct description and cost estimate for the major sections of the budget, as created using the SF 424 Budget Instructions and Worksheet provided below and created in eGrants. *One of your descriptions should be your evaluation costs during year 1 of your grant.*
- Discuss the adequacy of the budget to support the program design including how it is sufficient to support the program activities and how it is linked to your desired outputs and outcomes. *One section should specifically focus on the costs associated with your evaluation efforts and including any technical assistance you expect to offer. If evaluations will be paid for out of granted subgrantee funds, please indicate such and include an estimate for determining the amount of grant funding that will be used to cover subgrantee evaluation.*

In assessing applications, expert reviewers will examine the degree to which the applicant clearly describes and convincingly addresses the narrative guidelines provided. Specifically, reviewers will be using the criteria listed for Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy located on page 23.

SIF Evaluation: Additional Considerations

Use of Contracted Evaluation Experts: Intermediaries should strongly consider working with evaluation experts and/or require their subgrantees to contract with such experts.

Funding for Evaluation Activities: 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.

CNCS Role: CNCS will provide technical assistance on the design, implementation, and monitoring of their subgrantee evaluation plans. We want you to succeed!



Additional 2012 Competition Details

- In 2012, CNCS expects to select **up to six new grantees**, and will grant approximately **\$10-\$15 million**.
- Awards range from **\$1-\$5 million** per year, for **up to five years**.
- The competition launched on February 10, 2012. Applications are due on **March 27, 2012** by 5:00 pm Eastern Time. Announcements will be made by **early August**.
- **To apply**, visit the SIF 2012 [Notice of Funds Availability Page](#) for details on the application requirements, answers to frequently asked questions, and information on technical assistance calls and webinars.
- CNCS is sponsoring a final technical assistance call on **March 13** from 1-2pm EST. Please see the SIF website for more details.



Question and Answers

We welcome questions through the chat function of this presentation. We will also open the phone line.

Additional question inquiries may be sent to Innovation@cns.gov

Thank you.