

The Social Innovation Fund National Evaluation— General Information

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) National Evaluation began in October 2011 and will continue through the end of 2015. It focuses on the initial group of 11 intermediaries (grantees) and 136 community nonprofits (subgrantees) funded by the SIF in 2010 that are providing information for the SIF National Evaluation.

Background

Development of the National Evaluation began shortly after the initial cohort of intermediaries received SIF awards in 2010. CNCS commissioned Abt Associates to develop the design plan in consultation with the 2010 intermediaries, a Technical Working Group and thought leaders in social innovation. This initial work resulted in a [Summary of Evaluation Recommendations](#)¹ and 22 prioritized research questions that support the SIF's goals and theory of action.

The National Evaluation seeks to understand whether the SIF has met its intended goals by assessing how and the extent to which:

1. Outcomes have improved among those in need in underserved communities;
2. The evidence base for social program models has been strengthened;
3. Evidence-based programs change or stay the same as their scope increases;
4. Nonprofit capacity to implement and expand programs has increased and;
5. SIF has influenced the use of evidence, the flow of capital and the scaling of programs in public and private sectors.

Methodology

Multiple data sources and research methods are being used to conduct the evaluation. Quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods will generate and synthesize data from a variety of sources, including the intermediaries, their subgrantees and stakeholders, third party evaluators, non-SIF funders, intermediary organizations and community nonprofits.

Data Collections and Timeline

Topic	Data Collection	Timeline
1. Documenting SIF's Outcomes for People Served	Annual outcome and output data reported to intermediaries by the subgrantees to create a record of outcomes that are achieved over time	October 2012-2015
	Brief interviews with subgrantee organizations to understand the context for the outputs and outcomes documented	November 2012, 2013 and 2015
2. Strengthening the Evidence Base	Six Case Studies documenting the implementation of subgrantee evaluations over time	2015
	Document review of subgrantee evaluation plans and progress/monitoring reports	Ongoing
	Survey of evaluators of subgrantee programs	2014-2015
3. Expanding the Reach of Programs that Work	Document review and in-depth interviews with intermediaries to understand the strategies in place for scaling, replicating and/or expanding evidence-based program models and how evidence was used to influence expansion	Early 2013

¹ Available at: http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/11_0715_sif_summary_of_recommendations_final.pdf

Topic	Data Collection	Timeline
	Two sets of 15 Case Studies among subgrantee organizations to document the extent to which expanded programs adhere to the original program model and to identify how program expansion strategies may be categorized	Spring 2013 - first set, 2015 - second set
4. Using Intermediaries to Strengthen the Capacity of Nonprofits to Implement and Expand Programs	In-depth interviews with intermediaries to identify how they are assessing and meeting needs for capacity strengthening among sub grantees and the costs of providing training and technical assistance	Early 2013, 2015
	Two sets of 15 Case Studies among subgrantee organizations to document capacity-strengthening work that is planned and/or occurring and the extent to which these efforts support program implementation and expansion	Spring 2013 - first set, 2015 - second set
5. Influencing Policy, Funding and Practice	Interviews with three sets of non-SIF entities that mirror the types of organizations SIF strives to influence including federal agencies, philanthropic organizations, regional intermediary organizations and local nonprofit organizations	2015

Dissemination of Results

An interim report with preliminary findings is planned for the spring of 2013, in consideration of Congress' interest in early results of the SIF as part of the implementation of the Serve America Act signed in 2009. A conference on SIF program expansion strategies is planned for 2015, out of which a White Paper will describe implementation of scaling, replication and expansion strategies within the SIF. The final evaluation report will be submitted to Congress in the spring of 2016.

Research Partners

Westat (<http://www.westat.com/>) is a research firm with expertise in evaluation design, survey development, case study methodology, and quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. They are committed to addressing all 22 research questions through a variety of methodologies, which will involve analysis, synthesis and reporting of large amounts of disparate data.

Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund is an initiative of the Corporation for National and Community Service intended to improve the lives of people in low-income communities. It does so by mobilizing public and private resources to grow promising, innovative community-based solutions that have evidence of compelling impact in three areas of priority need: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development. For more information on the Social Innovation Fund, visit www.NationalService.gov/Innovation.

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