

SIF NOFA OVERVIEW WEBINAR #2 – GRANTEE PERSPECTIVE

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Summary of Discussion by

Wylie Chen, Vice President, Programs and Grants

U.S. Soccer Foundation, 2011 SIF Grantee

US Soccer Foundation

The **U.S. Soccer Foundation** was established in 1994 and serves as the major charitable arm of soccer in the United States. We view soccer as a powerful vehicle for social change. By supporting the development of places to play, places to grow and places to learn, our goal is to ensure that children in underserved communities have easy and affordable access to quality soccer programs that support their physical and personal development. We are currently providing children in 30 cities across the country with physical activity, nutrition education and mentorship through our Soccer for Success program, 13 of which are funded by our SIF grant.

Our SIF Project

In 2009 the U.S. Soccer Foundation launched Soccer for Success (SfS), a program focused on achieving health and social outcomes in children, ultimately growing the program to serve approximately 3,000 children after two years. This program was used as the basis of the SIF project U.S. Soccer initiated in 2011, and that decision has allowed SfS to scale exponentially. In the first year of our SIF project, our population served tripled, and currently the program has scaled to 30,000 children in 30 cities.

Benefits of a SIF Grant

1. **Credibility.** A SIF grant is a seal of approval to many, showing that our program model warrants federal investment.
2. **Fundraising Effectiveness.** In a similar vein as above, our SIF grant enabled us to approach funders and show that we already had secured millions of dollars from our federal award and our match funds, giving them assurance that we were serious about meeting our goals and achieving our anticipated outcomes.
3. **Partnership Facilitation.** The SIF grant boosted U.S. Soccer's image from that of a nonprofit working to increase physical activity among children to that of a

serious child-focused organization, widening the audience of people watching our work and the pool of interested partners.

4. **Program Evaluation Support.** With the guidance of both the SIF team and the CNCS Research and Evaluation department, we were able to work with our evaluator to develop quality measurement that would yield concrete and useful findings at the end of our project.
5. **Personalized Support.** In addition to the myriad opportunities opened up to us by the SIF grant, we received substantial support from our program officer and the rest of the SIF team. Not only were we able to scale and evaluate our program, we are guided every step of the way by people invested in our success. Among other things, the SIF team has helped us successfully navigate the world of federal grants compliance, offering invaluable support for a complex and mandatory process that can have serious repercussions if not done correctly.