

Corporation for National and Community Service

2010 Social Innovation Fund

Missouri Foundation for Health

Reviewer Comments – Phase 2

SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND 2010 EVALUATION CONSENSUS FORM

Instructions throughout this form are indicated in red.

Before you begin, please fill out the Applicant Name and Application ID# in the above header. This Evaluation Consensus Form (ECF) is where each panel records its consensus assessment of an application. The completion of this form may be led by any panelist; that individual will be designated the Lead Reviewer (LR). All Reviewers are expected to serve as the LR on at least two applications. **The evaluation consensus assessment should be based on the panel's examination of only the subcategories highlighted in red in the chart below, not the full application. In addition, Evaluation Reviewers should only assess how well applicants responded to the specific evidence-based criteria within the subcategories highlighted in yellow in this form.**

Category	Percentage	Subcategories
Program Design	45%	A. Goals and Objectives B. Use of Evidence C. Community Resources D. Description of Activities i. Subgranting ii. Technical Assistance and Support
Organizational Capacity	35%	A. Ability to Provide Program Oversight B. Ability to Provide Fiscal Oversight
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	20%	A. Budget and Program Design B. Match Sources

Panels will utilize Panel Consensus Calls to discuss each application and come to agreement on the content of the Narrative Assessment for each category, the Rating for each category, the Overall Appraisal Statement and the Band in which the application will be placed. When completing this form, the LR should rely on four primary documents: 1) the application being reviewed; 2) the SIF Review Notes page from each panelist; 3) the SIF Notice of Federal Funds Availability (NOFA); 4) the Consensus Rubric at the end of this form.

Please complete the following steps:

1. For each of the 3 categories the LR should:
 - a. **Write a 3 – 5 sentence Narrative Assessment** reflecting the panel's assessment of the quality of the response in the category being assessed; it is important that this narrative include brief summary information, but more importantly, the panel's evaluation of the application's quality.
 - b. **List the application's significant strengths and weaknesses and annotate each.** Each significant strength or weakness **must** be supported by **at least one** of the Eligibility or Application Review Criteria that were in the SIF NOFA. (criteria are included in this form)
 - c. **Taking into consideration** both the Narrative Assessment and the listed strengths and weaknesses, **select a category Rating** by checking the appropriate box.
2. **Complete the Overall Appraisal section.** In this section, you will:
 - a. Provide an Overall Appraisal Statement; and
 - b. Select a Consensus Band that represents the quality of the application as a whole. The Bands are described in the Overall Appraisal section at the end of this form.

PROGRAM DESIGN (45%)

The Social Innovation Fund Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) states that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Program Design.

A. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Corporation asks applicants to use a thematic approach in describing their proposed investments in community organizations. As established in the Act, there are two basic operational models of SIF intermediaries. The first is a SIF that will operate in a single geographic location, and address one or more priority issues within that location. This model is referred to as a "geographically-based SIF." The second model is a SIF that will address a single priority issue area in multiple geographic locations. This model is referred to as an "issue-based SIF." The Corporation will assess whether the application properly proposes goals and objectives as either a geographically-based or an issue-based SIF.

i. Geographically-Based SIF

The application must provide 1) statistics on the needs related to the issue area(s) within the specific local geographic area, and 2) information on the specific measurable outcomes related to those issue areas that the applicant will seek to improve.

ii. Issue-Based SIF

The application must provide 1) statistics on the needs related to the issue area within the geographic areas likely to be served, including statistics demonstrating that those geographic areas have a high need in the priority issue area, and 2) information on the specific measurable outcomes related to the priority issue area that the applicant will seek to improve.

B. USE OF EVIDENCE

i. Applicants must include in their application information describing their track record of using rigorous evidence, data, and evaluation tools to:

- *Select and invest in subgrantees;*
- *Support and monitor the replication and expansion of subgrantees; and*
- *Achieve measurable outcomes.*

D. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

i. Subgranting

- ##### **a.**
- Applicants must describe the process by which they will competitively select their nonprofit community organization subgrantees, and, if applicable, the process by which they have pre-selected some subgrantees. Specifically, applicants must describe how their competitive subgrant selection process will ensure a portfolio of subgrantees that are innovative nonprofit community organizations serving low-income communities and that possess:*

- *A commitment to and track record of using data and evaluation for performance and program improvement;*
- *Evidence of effectiveness, including a demonstrated track record of achieving specific measurable outcomes related to the measurable outcomes for the intermediary;*
- *Strong potential for replication or expansion;*
- *A well-defined plan for achieving specific measurable outcomes connected to the measurable outcomes for the intermediary, evaluation of program effectiveness, performance improvement, and replication or expansion; and*

ii. **Technical Assistance and Support**

- a. *Applicants must include in their application information describing how they will provide technical assistance and support (other than financial support) that will increase the ability of subgrantees to achieve their measurable outcomes, including replication or expansion. Replication or expansion may happen in various ways (including, for example, creating new sites or affiliating with another program to replicate an intervention) and in multiple contexts (including, for example, serving more people in a current geography or growing to new geographies).*

Provide a panel assessment of the application's PROGRAM DESIGN as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

The applicant proposes to invest in 10 to 20 low-income, high need communities in Missouri, with the goal of improving health in targeted areas by reducing risk factors for obesity and tobacco, two of the leading preventable causes of chronic diseases. They demonstrate the negative risk profiles of low-income Missourians, and thus have a sound rationale for investing in this geographically based area. The organization is the largest health foundation in the state and has a demonstrated track record of using data tools (e.g., surveillance surveys, mapping technologies) to target their grantees and shape their grantees' goals. The primary focus of past grantees' work has centered on process-focused measurements, such as sustainability of programming and organizational changes. Although the long-term outcomes are admittedly harder to improve, a stronger theoretical or empirical link between process outcomes and health improvements are not clearly made by the applicant. The applicant does demonstrate a plan to use evaluations tools with previous and current grantees, and is proposing to replicate a community-based integrated prevention model (Community Health Improvement (CHI)) with SIF funding, developed from earlier funding initiatives. The applicant describes a clear and linear strategy to monitor and evaluate the short, intermediate, and long-term goals of the grantees, relying on the foundation's staff evaluations and knowledge along with external expertise, grantee reports, and site visits, in addition to surveillance and mapping data. However, there is a greater need for outlining methods by which the foundation will assess and cultivate community buy-in by the grantees, especially among the residents and local institutions targeted. This will be a key factor in determining replicability and expansion for intermediate and long-term success.

Significant Strengths

(+) The applicant provides statistics that support the case for focusing on both the health outcomes of interest (tobacco and obesity), and the populations targeted (low-income and underserved groups). Missouri has obesity rates higher than the national average, and the fourth highest smoking rates in the country. The health and fiscal costs of treating the associated health conditions of these behaviors are sufficiently documented. (*Program Design, A, i*)

(+) The applicant demonstrates a track record of working in these health areas since 2004, through funding two initiatives – Healthy and Active Communities (HAC) and Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Initiative (TPCI). They note that through these initiatives, 215 local policies have been changed, a clear short-term achievement. Furthermore, they note that there have been declines in the prevalence of health outcomes of interest (specifically a decline in tobacco use in several funded communities). (*Program Design, B, i*)

(+) Based on past experience, they further outline a solid evaluation plan to support and monitor grantees, with each grantee conducting internal evaluations and use of an external evaluator to assess the overall progress on process and outcomes among the portfolio of grantees. In past initiatives, sub-grantees that demonstrate success are invited to apply for further funding, which ensures accountability and reifies an emphasis on the need for constant evaluation. These evaluations have been widely disseminated to stakeholders, and presented more broadly to academic and public health organizations. They thus have a clear plan and past record of promoting information sharing and learning based on their evaluations. (*Program Design, B, i*)

(+) The applicant proposes a competitive model by which to select sub-grantees, through two phases. The first phase consists of soliciting and reviewing concept papers, with information on target community, broad project goals, identification of partners, and community readiness listed as key criteria. Foundation staff members will also identify areas with high need using surveillance data to supplement these concept papers. Based on these indicators and evaluations, the applicant will invite 10 to 20 communities to submit full proposals. The review criteria, including community need, use of measurable health objectives, community partnerships, evidence of effectiveness, and sustainability, is clearly delineated and is appropriate to the proposed funding goals. Through this process, the applicant expresses an awareness and rigor of understanding baseline criteria for fostering success in hard-to-change areas (*Program Design, D, i*)

(+) The applicant shows a commitment to and relevant experience with conducting baseline evaluations, and providing technical assistance and training. Specifically, they propose to conduct skill-building workshops, advocacy and dissemination trainings, and will host peer based learning exchanges to encourage partnerships. They will also assist sub-grantees in developing logic models to assess inputs, outputs, and outline how activities will achieve short and long-term goals. They have strong relationships with external evaluators, and draw heavily from the research community at universities in the state. Together, these facts demonstrate the applicant's clear understanding of how to create tangible targets with sub-grantees, and how to draw from previous relationships with reputable evaluators. (*Program Design, D, ii*)

Significant Weaknesses

(-) The applicant discusses replication and expansion of a CHI model as part of the SIF grant-making process. However, the description of the CHI model is brief and more critical discussion is needed of what this model is and why it is the most appropriate one to use. Does this mean that it is more holistic than their previous funding efforts that focused solely on tobacco OR obesity? How does this model connect to the social determinants of health, that are well-documented fundamental causes of poor health behaviors – including poverty, low educational attainment, segregation, and stress? (*Program Design, B, i*)

(-) The applicant attributes process and policy changes from their past initiatives as evidence for effectiveness on measurable health outcomes. As noted above, they cite the fact that smoking rates decreased in some targeted communities as attributable to TPCI initiatives. It would have been more useful for the applicant to describe why there was not an impact in other targeted communities in the proposal and even more important to identify how the applicant shifted or reassessed their grantees activities based on this information. Doing so would reflect an understanding by the foundation that lessons of limited impact are important to address as part of their monitoring and evaluation activities. (*Program Design B, i*)

(-) The examples provided of evaluations based on previously funded initiatives, specifically TPCI and HAC, do demonstrate a track record of policy action and local institutional changes. That said, the reports cited by the applicant provide limited evidence of intermediate or long-term change. The link between process outcomes and health improvements are not clearly made by the applicant. They further note that evaluation results from these programs demonstrate that policy activities are the most effective means to address change in a community, but there is no research evidence to back up this statement. For instance, policies can often be symbolic and not causal to outcomes (e.g., fast food zones are often in areas where obesity rates are already not particularly high, and reflect a higher socioeconomic status in the community make-up than a pressing community health concern). (*Program Design, B, i*).

(-) There is a greater need for outlining methods by which the foundation will assess and cultivate community buy-in by the grantees, especially among the residents targeted. Although community partnership and responsiveness are key criteria for sub-grantee selection, this might not be enough to impact population-level change. The applicant should address how they will assist and work with sub-grantees in developing local and grass-roots support, as resident or local institutional resistance will greatly impede progress. (*Program Design B, i*)

Select a Rating for PROGRAM DESIGN (double-click in the applicable box and select “checked”)

Excellent

Strong

Satisfactory

Weak/Non-responsive

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (35%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA** states that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Organizational Capacity.

A. ABILITY TO PROVIDE PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

In evaluating your organization's ability to provide program oversight, the Corporation will consider:

- i. *The extent to which your organization has a sound structure including:*
 - *The ability to provide sound programmatic oversight, including:*
 - *Experience with and capacity for evaluation; and*
 - *Experience with and capacity for supporting replication or expansion.*
 - *A well-designed plan and systems for organizational (as opposed to subgrantee) self-assessment and continuous improvement*

 - ii. *Whether your organization has a sound record of accomplishment, including the extent to which you:*
 - *Have a track record of supporting organizations that demonstrate evidence of impact;*
-

Provide a panel assessment of the application's ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
 - **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
 - **Select a Rating for this section.**
-

Panel Narrative Assessment

The applicant organization has been engaged in grantmaking for healthy communities since 2002, and has 700 active grants and contracts across the state of Missouri. It has ten health-related funding programs, including tobacco prevention and obesity prevention, and evaluation, technical assistance and capacity building are incorporated into these programs. They have a demonstrated track record of partnering with other health and stakeholder organizations, employing technical assistance, and a clear dissemination strategy. They have a grants manager on staff, and the program area staff conduct site visits and assess the semi-annual reports required by grantees. The foundation also has in-house experts to review the evaluation techniques and results. In the past, they have contracted with eight external evaluation teams, some of whom are more experienced than others. They have replicated some of their work on tobacco cessation across worksites and schools, and have a diverse portfolio of grantees.

Significant Strengths

(+) The foundation has in-house staff who are capable of reviewing and critiquing the evaluation reports of the outside contractors, including a Director of Evaluation. The applicant can thus provide consistent oversight of monitoring of grantee activities, which fosters the goal of replication.

(+) The organization has appropriately allocated program officers to cover particular geographic areas. This structure allows the PO to foster community building and familiarity with local dynamics.

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(+) They also have a strong relationship with key stakeholder groups in the area of tobacco and obesity prevention, based on their previous funding activities. This will allow for ease of replication.

Significant Weaknesses

(-) The vetting process for external evaluators used to monitor sub-grantees' work should be more fully described. What criteria are used when contracting with an evaluator? How does the foundation assess rigor when determining which evaluation team to rely on? More delineation of this aspect of grant-making and evaluation is warranted by the foundation.

(-) The applicant organization methods for organizational self-assessment and continued monitoring are somewhat insular and lean toward subjectiveness. The two main strategies include surveying past grantees (who have a vested interest in maintaining good relations with the foundation) and a self-assessment survey every two years at the board of director's level. The applicant should consider broadening their self-assessment approach to examine some more objective measures of impact and visibility in their grant-making procedures and approaches.

Select a Rating for ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

Excellent

Strong

Satisfactory

Weak/Non-responsive

COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (20%)

The Social Innovation Fund NOFA states that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

A. BUDGET AND PROGRAM DESIGN

In evaluating the cost effectiveness and budget adequacy of your proposed program, the Corporation will consider:

- i. *Whether your program is cost-effective*
- ii. *Whether your budget is adequate to support your program design.*

Provide a panel assessment of the application's COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY as follows:

- Write a brief Narrative Assessment;
- List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the

applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and

- **Select a Rating for this section.**
-

Panel Narrative Assessment

The program budget for the applicant is appropriate. They seek a little over \$1 million from a SIF award, and propose to sub-grant 83% of those funds. They have the appropriate match funds, using the foundation's available resources. Personnel and travel budget are based on prior experience with funding initiatives, and are appropriate. The foundation has allocated \$200,000 to external consultants in support of evaluation (\$100,000) and technical assistance to subgrantees (\$100,000). Provided that the technical assistance provider will support evaluation capacity of subgrantees, the budget allocation is reasonable for conducting the evaluation. Additionally, the foundation has internal evaluation capacity which will also contribute to the strength of the component.

Significant Strengths

(+) The foundation, though well-equipped financially, expresses a commitment to assisting subgrantees in cultivating resources to raise sub-grant funds. They plan to draw on their connections with non-federal organizations to promote program implementation. These will be critical relationships for subgrantees in the future, and allow for a sustainable funding strategy.

(+) The foundation has the proper capacity and systems in place to provide fiscal oversight. The in-house grants management team consists of 3.5 full-time professionals with business administration backgrounds, who will monitor compliance and funding spending.

(+) The foundation has internal evaluation staff and has committed adequate funds to the evaluation component, provided that the technical assistance providers use a significant portion of the TA monies to support subgrantees' evaluation capacity (10% of overall budget).

Significant Weaknesses

None

Select a Rating for COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

Excellent

Strong

Satisfactory

Weak/Non-responsive

OVERALL APPRAISAL

I. Provide a 3 - 5 sentence Overall Appraisal Statement of the application taking into consideration:

- The Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, and Ratings from each category; and
- The weighting of each category (Program Design (45%), Organizational Capacity (35%), Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (20%)).

The applicant has a sound understanding of the health concerns and needs in their target areas, and appropriately target two behaviors that are amenable to change. The applicant also has a track record in investing in low-income and underserved areas, and in working with grantees who are dedicated to promoting healthier lifestyles. They will employ a community-based prevention strategy to promote policy and behavioral change, which is a logical place-based model of health promotion. That said, the organization needs to better justify the empirical rationale for employing and replicating this strategy over others, and needs to document stronger connections between program inputs and evaluative outputs, especially for their specified intermediate and longer term goals. Furthermore, while it is clear that the foundation has successfully funded efforts that result in policy change, they do not sufficiently articulate or provide evidence in the proposal on how their funding initiatives contributed to policy change. Additionally, the applicant does not articulate a strategy for building up community-buy in from the ground-level up, which may be fundamental to long-term sustainability and expansion and population-based health improvements. Nonetheless, the organization is well-suited to act as an intermediary in this area, with experienced in-house staff and expertise, and a clearly outlined, solid program design to monitor and evaluate the work of their sub-grantees. They have appropriate ties to research universities to assist them in their evaluations of grantees (though the vetting process for other external evaluation teams is not clear and should be documented), alongside good connections with other non-profit foundations and organizations invested in the same subject area. Given the foundation's experience, knowledge, and commitment to the subject area of healthy communities, and their ties to stakeholders and experience dissemination, the weaknesses outlined above are outweighed by the numerable strengths. We give this application a band of "Strong."

II. Select one Band for this application (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")
Ensure that your selection is supported by your panel's Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, Ratings, and Overall Appraisal Statement. Take into consideration the weighting of each category.

- Band I (Excellent):** A comprehensive and thorough application of excellent merit with very significant strengths and no/minimal significant weaknesses.
- Band II (Strong):** An application that demonstrates overall competence and is worthy of support, where the value of the significant strengths outweigh the identified weaknesses.
- Band III (Satisfactory):** An application with potential, where strengths and weaknesses are approximately equal. However, some fundamental weaknesses have been identified.

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- Band IV (Weak/Non-Responsive):** An application with very significant weaknesses and no/minimal significant strengths that have been identified. This option may also include an application that is non-responsive to the published criteria.

CONSENSUS RUBRIC

Please use this Consensus Rubric as guidance when selecting your Ratings or Bands.

BAND I (Excellent) — *A BAND I rating reflects that the application is compelling, consistently excellent in quality, and addresses all requirements; thereby showing the highest potential for success.*

The **Excellent** application consistently:

- ✓ Goes beyond what was requested, showing that the applicant has anticipated issues that may arise.
- ✓ Provides a thorough, detailed response to all of the information requested.
- ✓ Provides a clear and highly compelling description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Provides clear evidence to support all objectives of this section (no assumptions are made).
- ✓ Supports ideas and objectives with comprehensive plans explaining and connecting ideas to objectives.

BAND II (Strong) — *A BAND II rating reflects that the application is solid, good-quality, and has great potential for success.*

The **Strong** application:

- ✓ Provides a response to all of the information requested.
- ✓ Provides a realistic description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Explains most assumptions and reasons.
- ✓ Supports ideas with comprehensive plans, examples, or outlines.

BAND III (Satisfactory) — *A BAND III rating reflects that the application generally meets requirements for a reasonable chance of success, but is neither especially strong nor especially weak.*

The **Satisfactory** application:

- ✓ Covers most of the information requested, with a few exceptions.
- ✓ Is sometimes unclear how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.

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- ✓ Makes some assumptions and leaves some reasons unexplained.
- ✓ Supports individual ideas with plans, examples, or outline.

BAND IV (Weak/Non-responsive) — *A weak/non-responsive rating reflects that the application is below standard especially in ability, skill, or quality; indicating that this application will most likely not succeed as described or is not responsive to the application requirements.*

The **Weak/Non-responsive** application:

- ✓ Does not provide one or more key pieces of requested information.
- ✓ Gives an unclear description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Gives many unsupported assumptions and reasons with little or no connection to objectives.
- ✓ Tends to “parrot” back the question, rather than answer and explain it
- ✓ Makes many assumptions and many reasons are not defined.
- ✓ Did not connect the activities to the anticipated results.
- ✓ Does not address or respond to the requirements/conditions of the NOFA.
- ✓ Proposes activities that are not consistent with the NOFA and application instructions.