

Corporation for National and Community Service

2010 Social Innovation Fund

United Way of Greater Cincinnati

Reviewer Comments – Phase 1

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2010 Social Innovation Fund

United Way of Greater Cincinnati

Section 1 – Reviewer Comments: Group 1

Applicant Name: _____
 Application ID#: _____

SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND 2010 PANEL 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 Panel Consensus Form (PCF) 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 Expert Reviewers are expected to serve as the LR on at least one application. The consensus assessment should be based on the panel's examination of the full application Narrative, which consists of the following 3 categories:

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 IRW Compilation for the application being reviewed (compiled prior to discussion by the panel Facilitator); 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 (Program Design; Organizational Capacity; Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy), 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 is not a summary of the application, rather 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. (examples are included in this form)
 - c. **Taking into consideration** both the Narrative Assessment and the listed strengths and weaknesses, **select a 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, and Appendix D of the Review Guide

3. **After the panel has discussed all applications, provide a Rank for each application.**

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

To apply as a geographically-based SIF, the applicant must propose to focus on serving low-income communities within a specific local geographic area, and propose to focus on improving measurable outcomes related to one or more of the following priority issue areas:

- **Economic Opportunity** – Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals;
- **Youth Development and School Support** – Preparing America's youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives;
- **Healthy Futures** – Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness.

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

To apply as an issue-based SIF, the application must propose to focus on addressing one of the following priority issue areas within multiple low-income communities:

- **Economic Opportunity** – Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals;
- **Youth Development and School Support** – Preparing America's youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives;
- **Healthy Futures** – Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness.

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.

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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.*

C. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Not applicable. The applicant's Community Resources should be assessed in the Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy section. Applicants were instructed **not** to provide information in this section. If applicants include information in this section, it should not be considered in your overall rating for the Program Design section.

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 strong theory of change;*
 - *Strong leadership and financial and management systems, including data management;*
 - *A strong financial position, including funding diversity, the ability to meet the requirements for providing dollar-for-dollar matching funds, and the ability to sustain the initiative after the subgrant period concludes;*
 - *Strong community relationships;*
 - *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*
 - *A commitment to use grant funds to replicate, expand, or support their programs.*

Either as part of its review of the applications or in clarification reviews prior to award, the Corporation may request additional information regarding pre-selected subgrantees for compliance and appropriate outcomes.

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*

Applicant Name: _____
Application ID#: _____

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 United Way of Greater Cincinnati application is a statewide "geographic multiple" proposal relating to two priority issue areas, youth development and economic opportunity, delivered through its established "Strive Partnership" of corporate, social service, philanthropic and educational leaders, using an adaptation of GE's "Six Sigma" process. The application presents a well-designed program that has been long in development with an informed understanding of best practices for supporting the delivery and extension of social innovation. It presents a well-conceived adaptation of the Six Sigma process and integration of strategic metrics, data collection and performance reporting on measurable outcomes that align closely with strategic priorities across the entire service network.

Significant Strengths

- Strong track record of using evidence to select and fund subgrantees, including increasing, terminating and adjusting grants based on data, and carefully managing program expansion. (*Program Design B.i.*)
- The applicant proposes to provide significant training to subgrantees in the areas of evidence collection, replication and organizational effectiveness. (*Program Design B.ii.a*)
- The applicant brings a clearly defined approach to its work with grantees – a variation of the Six Sigma process. Grantees are provided with technical assistance to help them bring this approach to their own organizations and efforts. (*Program Design B.i.*)
- Since 2008, the partnership has prepared an annual report card focused on youth development and education. This is the basis for a cogent case for need in the community along the dimensions of Ready for School, Ready for College, Ready for Life. The report card is also the basis for clear target outcomes for the community along these priority dimensions. (*Program Design B.i.*)
- The applicant has experience in developing data systems and tracking data (for example, Winning Beginnings). Applicant also has experience with experimental design (Books in Action). (*Program Design D.i.*)

Significant Weaknesses

- The applicant's principal evaluation partner, INNOVATIONS, is described as a "community-collaborative [of] clinical psychologists." While clinical psychologists may be well-equipped to measure (and assist subgrantees in establishing indices through which to measure) impact on youth development, it is not clear that they are equally well equipped to measure impact of economic opportunity, the other priority area the applicant proposes to focus on. (*Program Design D.ii.a.*)

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- The partnership of 4 organizations seems a bit cumbersome and one of these organizations is a partnership consisting of a variety of community organizations and leaders. Energy and resources could be diverted to managing the needs and preferences of all the partners groups. (*Program Design B.*)

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.*
 - *Well-defined roles for your Board of directors, administrators, and staff;*
 - *A well-designed plan and systems for organizational (as opposed to subgrantee) self-assessment and continuous improvement; and*
 - *The ability to provide and/or secure effective technical assistance.*
- 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;*
 - *Demonstrate leadership within the organization and strong relationships within the communities served;*
 - *Have a track-record of raising substantial resources, and, if you are an existing Federal grantee, having secured the matching resources as required in your prior grant awards; and*
 - *The extent to which your community support recurs, increases in scope or amount, and is more diverse, as evidenced by:*
 - *Collaborations that include a diverse spectrum of community stakeholders;*
 - *A broad base of financial support, including local financial and in-kind contributions; and*
 - *Supporters who represent a wide range of community stakeholders.*

B. ABILITY TO PROVIDE FISCAL OVERSIGHT

Entities eligible to apply for SIF grants include:

- *Existing grantmaking institutions, or*

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-
- *Partnerships between an existing grantmaking institution and another grantmaking institution, a State Commission, or the chief executive officer of a unit of general local government*
- i. *Existing grantmaking institutions are organizations in existence at the time of the application where, investing in nonprofit community organizations or programs is an essential (rather than collateral) means of fulfilling their mission and vision. In keeping with this view, grantmaking institutions will generally have the following as part of their core operating functions:*
- *Conducting open or otherwise competitive programs to award grants to or make investments in a diverse portfolio of nonprofit community organizations;*
 - *Negotiating specific grant requirements with nonprofit community organizations; and*
 - *Overseeing and monitoring the performance of grantees.*
- ii. *In evaluating your organization's ability to provide fiscal oversight, the Corporation will take into account its review of your organization's capacity. The Corporation will further consider:*
- *The extent to which your organization, or proposed partnership, has key personnel with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience to provide fiscal oversight of subgrantees; and*
 - *Whether your organization, or proposed partnership, has specific experience in providing fiscal oversight of subgrantees of Federal funds.*

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

Strong track record of supporting organizations with demonstrated impact on defined and aligned performance measures. Demonstrated ability to form diverse partnerships across sectors and areas of need, with long-term, recurring and high-level financial and nonfinancial support from diverse stakeholders. Capable systems and practices for rigorous competitive selection of subgrantees consistent with program design and operations requirements, including the ability to work with promising but less experienced organizations requiring greater levels of support to achieve the required standards for use of data, evaluation and ongoing improvement.

Significant Strengths

- Strong track record of providing disciplined and coordinated program oversight, including evaluation and scaling, through well-developed decision-making and governance structure of networks, partnerships and oversight mechanisms at appropriate levels of control and expertise. (*Organizational Capacity A.i.*)
- Extremely well defined roles and responsibilities at all executive levels, with clear assignment of staff responsibilities, and excellent leveraging of expertise and experience from broad spectrum of governmental, corporate, volunteer, and philanthropic organizations, with established self-

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assessment and course-corrective processes and effective deployment of technical assistance.
(*Organizational Capacity A.i.*)

- The applicant has considerable experience with grantmaking and evaluation and, along with its program partner, Strive, has robust relations throughout the community; its staff appears adequate to offer the programmatic oversight required. (*Organizational Capacity A.i. and ii.*)
- The applicant has 14 FTEs in its accounting department and experience with federal discretionary grants. (*Organizational Capacity B.ii*)

Significant Weaknesses

- None.

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:

- Whether your program is cost-effective based on:*
 - *The extent to which your program demonstrates diverse, non-Federal resources for program implementation and sustainability;*
 - *The extent to which you are proposing to provide more than the minimum required share of the costs of your program; and*
 - *Whether the reasonable and necessary costs of your program or project are higher because you are proposing to serve areas that are significantly philanthropically underserved.*
- Whether your budget is adequate to support your program design.*

B. MATCH SOURCES

- At the time of submission of the application, applicants must demonstrate either cash-on-hand or commitments (or a combination thereof) toward meeting 50 percent their first year matching funds, based on the amount of Federal grant funds applied for.*
- In addition to the match eligibility criteria, the Corporation will evaluate the extent to which you have a combination of cash-on-hand or commitments to meet the full match requirements, and whether your organization will be able to provide financial resources for your SIF program beyond the minimum required match.*

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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 budget appears appropriate and integrated with the program design, and the United Way has adequate staffing. Further explanation of the status of match funding discussions to date could ameliorate a perceived weakness in the application.

Significant Strengths

- Applicant has systematically engaged the philanthropic, corporate, governmental, community, and nonprofit sectors in an accountable and sustainable web of support that is integrated with the program design and Six Sigma processes. *(Cost Effectiveness A.i. and ii.)*
- Particular effort is devoted to enhancing donor understanding of and commitment to the applicant's overall strategy, increasing the likelihood of recurring and expanding support. *(Cost Effectiveness A.i. and ii.)*
- Budget size and composition are developed thoughtfully to support the program, organizational structure and operational requirements. *(Cost Effectiveness A.i. and ii.)*

Significant Weaknesses

- The applicant should clarify whether its concerns about raising additional funds given "current economic conditions" and previous funding commitments on the part of potential donors relate to the minimum match requirements. If not, the applicant should identify specific supporters that will enable it to meet the minimum match requirements and its reasons for having confidence that the matching funds will be raised. *(Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy B.ii.)*

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%)).

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This is a creative and thoughtful proposal that reflects disciplined and coherent strategic planning, combined with robust organizational development and the intelligent integration of complementary stakeholders and community resources. The adaptation of the Six Sigma process appears quite promising, but substantial effort will have to be made to prevent the managerial and operational organizational structure from becoming unwieldy. There is a measured and disciplined approach to identifying and supporting growth-ready programs, with an integrated approach for providing technical assistance and support to a wide range of subgrantees at varying levels of experience with and capacity for using data and evaluation to maximize impact. The applicant should consider providing further explanation relating to the identified area of weakness in the Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy section.

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.
- 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.

Rank

As a panel, Rank this application in relation to the other applications on your panel. Complete this section only after all applications before your panel have been reviewed and consensus has been achieved on each one. The highest rank is "1".

Rank: 1 of 7 total applications on Panel # 8.

Applicant Name: _____
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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.
- ✓ 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.

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- ✓ 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.

2010 Social Innovation Fund

United Way of Greater Cincinnati

Section 2 – Reviewer Comments: Group 2

SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND 2010 PANEL CONSENSUS FORM

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 - c. **Taking into consideration** both the Narrative Assessment and the listed strengths and weaknesses, **select a Rating** by checking the appropriate box.

2. **Complete the Overall Appraisal section.** In this section, you will:
 - a. Provide an Overall Appraisal Statement; and
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PROGRAM DESIGN (45%)

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A. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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To apply as a geographically-based SIF, the applicant must propose to focus on serving low-income communities within a specific local geographic area, and propose to focus on improving measurable outcomes related to one or more of the following priority issue areas:

- **Economic Opportunity** – Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals;
- **Youth Development and School Support** – Preparing America's youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives;
- **Healthy Futures** – Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness.

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

To apply as an issue-based SIF, the application must propose to focus on addressing one of the following priority issue areas within multiple low-income communities:

- **Economic Opportunity** – Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals;
- **Youth Development and School Support** – Preparing America's youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives;
- **Healthy Futures** – Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness.

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*
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C. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Not applicable. The applicant's Community Resources should be assessed in the Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy section. Applicants were instructed **not** to provide information in this section. If applicants include information in this section, it should not be considered in your overall rating for the Program Design section.

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 strong theory of change;*
 - *Strong leadership and financial and management systems, including data management;*
 - *A strong financial position, including funding diversity, the ability to meet the requirements for providing dollar-for-dollar matching funds, and the ability to sustain the initiative after the subgrant period concludes;*
 - *Strong community relationships;*
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Either as part of its review of the applications or in clarification reviews prior to award, the Corporation may request additional information regarding pre-selected subgrantees for compliance and appropriate outcomes.

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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 presents a geographically-based proposal which is focused on youth development and school support in the Greater Cincinnati area (Cincinnati, Ohio and Covington and Newport, Kentucky). The applicant has partnered with Strive, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, and the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. / U.S. Bank Foundation. The applicant is not applying with any pre-selected grantee organizations.

The panel admired the applicant's ambition to address both the Youth Development and Economic Opportunity issue areas in Covington, Newport, and Cincinnati with its "Cradle to Career" theory of change. However, the narrative only went into detail about pre-kindergarten and pre-career readiness programs, providing very little information about the crucial years in between, let alone how early childhood education affects employment or how such longitudinal objectives can be measured. The proposal was backed by ample evidence and a detailed evaluative framework, but these strong points were counterbalanced by the minimal record of expansion and replication in UWGC's 90-year history in the area and in their three-year old partnership with Strive, the co-lead intermediary.

Significant Strengths

- At the outset, the applicant presents an in-depth explanation of community needs in the geographies to be served in the urban core of Greater Cincinnati. The narrative identifies the three cities as having "the highest percentage of poverty in the region," and most staggering was the statistic that 40.3% of children under 18 fall below the poverty line. (p. 5) This evidence, along with the other statistics on poverty rates and alarmingly low percentages of children assessed to be "ready for kindergarten" (48%, 71% and 62% in Cincinnati, Covington, and Newport, respectively, p. 6) represent a compelling case for supporting programs in the youth and economic development issue areas as proposed. (*Program Design A.1.*)
- The subgranting framework as presented by United Way is decidedly evidence-driven. p. 7 provides school-age specific metrics, p. 10-11 outlines the Six Sigma model adapted from a corporate partner to use "data to drive continuous improvement within the social sector," pages 12-13 provide two specific examples of how the applicant used concrete statistics to reward programs that improved (Books in Action and Winning Beginnings) or restrict funding from subgrantees that failed to produce positive measurable results (p. 15), and finally their commitment to fund programs that show only preliminary evidentiary results if and only if the

finds go toward building capacity to conduct evaluation and ongoing data analysis. (p. 33)

(Program Design B.i.)

- Admirably, the applicant plans to "level the playing field" with its application process, providing trainings and guidelines for prospective applicants (including information about the Six Sigma model which is the basis of UWGC's evaluative system). In so doing, UWGC is going beyond the "usual suspect" category of subgrantees, opening the door for potentially more innovative organizations to thrive in one of the most economically disadvantaged regions of the country (p. 19). This is well-aligned with the SIF NOFA, as well as common knowledge that more inclusion correlates with more community buy-in and more creative solutions. (Program Design D.i.a.)

Significant Weaknesses

- While the narrative provided good macro evidence of geographic need using poverty rate and kindergarten preparedness data for the cities (p. 5), nowhere did they further demarcate their target market using age, income level, location, ethnicity, or outreach strategies to reach the most underserved in their location. While this does not automatically feeble community ties and support, it was consistent with a dearth of evidence of "strong community relationships" throughout the application, a specific guideline of the NOFA in this section. (Program Design D.i.a.)
- Measurements (page 8-9) are unspecific (e.g. increase % children ready for school, increase high school graduation rates, increase health indicators, prepare to succeed etc.). The applicant does not provide current statistics, the extent to which they aim to increase or decrease these factors, and above all, how they link UW's programming to social impact in the Cincinnati urban core. (Program Design A.i.)
- Although they have been active in the region for more than nine decades, and formally partnered with Strive for going on four years, the applicant cites only one concrete example of replication (Books in Action p. 12-13) expanded from operating in five classrooms to 35. Although the applicant references the importance of replicability in their grantee process several more times, there is a lack of emphasis on UWGC's track record in this respect, which significantly weakens the application. (Program Design D.i.a.)

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.*
 - *Well-defined roles for your Board of directors, administrators, and staff;*
 - *A well-designed plan and systems for organizational (as opposed to subgrantee) self-assessment and continuous improvement; and*
 - *The ability to provide and/or secure effective technical assistance.*
- 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;*
 - *Demonstrate leadership within the organization and strong relationships within the communities served;*
 - *Have a track-record of raising substantial resources, and, if you are an existing Federal grantee, having secured the matching resources as required in your prior grant awards; and*
 - *The extent to which your community support recurs, increases in scope or amount, and is more diverse, as evidenced by:*
 - *Collaborations that include a diverse spectrum of community stakeholders;*
 - *A broad base of financial support, including local financial and in-kind contributions; and*
 - *Supporters who represent a wide range of community stakeholders.*

B. ABILITY TO PROVIDE FISCAL OVERSIGHT

Entities eligible to apply for SIF grants include:

- *Existing grantmaking institutions, or*
 - *Partnerships between an existing grantmaking institution and another grantmaking institution, a State Commission, or the chief executive officer of a unit of general local government*
- i. *Existing grantmaking institutions are organizations in existence at the time of the application where, investing in nonprofit community organizations or programs is an essential (rather than collateral) means of fulfilling their mission and vision. In keeping with this view, grantmaking institutions will generally have the following as part of their core operating functions:*
- *Conducting open or otherwise competitive programs to award grants to or make investments in a diverse portfolio of nonprofit community organizations;*
 - *Negotiating specific grant requirements with nonprofit community organizations; and*
 - *Overseeing and monitoring the performance of grantees.*
- ii. *In evaluating your organization's ability to provide fiscal oversight, the Corporation will take into account its review of your organization's capacity. The Corporation will further consider:*
- *The extent to which your organization, or proposed partnership, has key personnel with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience to provide fiscal oversight of subgrantees; and*
 - *Whether your organization, or proposed partnership, has specific experience in providing fiscal oversight of subgrantees of Federal funds.*

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 United Way of Greater Cincinnati received a Satisfactory rating for Organizational Capacity due to the mixed evidence it provided in this category. UW's internal structure and staff have a reliable record of providing sound fiscal oversight and ability to provide technical support subgrantees. On the other hand, the applicant did not go into detail regarding the role of its partners, who are evidently essential to UW's program oversight, and the narrative did not draw bright lines around the roles of its funders and advisors, which has the potential to generate inefficiencies and conflicts of interest.

Significant Strengths

- United Way of GC has the internal capacity to manage multiple grants and accounts as evidenced by their past successful track record of administering federal grants (\$4.6 million in federal funds over the past five years with exemplary audits, for example, p. 24). Their ability to provide fiscal and program oversight was bolstered by their resourceful partnership with the Kentucky University's Institute for Nonprofit Capacity building (p. 19), as well as the background of their staff (p. 27-29) who, together, form a well-rounded team for administering UW/GC's programming. (Organizational Capacity A.i.)
- Strive, as the lead partner, has demonstrable experience in working with nonprofits on data-driven improvements, lending credibility to the proposed project's ability to manage the subgrantee process in the Youth Development and School Support issue areas. (Organizational Capacity A.i.)
- The review panel was impressed by the applicant's emphasis on technical assistance, including web and in-person learning teams who meet to share best practices among other subgrantees as part of a Social Innovation Network (p. 27). (Organizational Capacity A.i.)

Significant Weaknesses

- The applicant's partners are listed as Strive, Greater Cincinnati Foundation (GCF), Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile / U.S. Bank Foundation, Innovations, and the Institute for Nonprofit Capacity. Hardly any information is provided about GCF, Haile, or U.S. Bank Foundation, yet they evidently possess significant "ownership" of the subgrantee projects (p. 32).
- The applicant states that its funders will participate on an "oversight committee that provides a role for them in the competitive grant process and in project implementation" (p. 32). Unless the funders have specific expertise in this area, their inclusion in the selection and oversight process is unlikely to be a productive use of their time, nor does it ensure an entirely transparent and results-based management process. (Organizational Capacity B.i.)

- Our concern for UWGC's capacity for replication and expansion (detailed above under Program Design) was also considered a shortcoming in the applicant's organizational capacity. (Organizational Capacity A.i.)
- Similarly, our concern about the applicant's "demonstrated track record" of accomplishment and relationships in the communities in which they work echoes in this category as well. The narrative focuses on a "broad spectrum" of funders, rather than a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including beneficiaries who seemed to have no voice throughout the narrative. (Organizational Capacity A.ii.)

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 based on:*
 - *The extent to which your program demonstrates diverse, non-Federal resources for program implementation and sustainability;*
 - *The extent to which you are proposing to provide more than the minimum required share of the costs of your program; and*
 - *Whether the reasonable and necessary costs of your program or project are higher because you are proposing to serve areas that are significantly philanthropically underserved.*
- ii. *Whether your budget is adequate to support your program design.*

B. MATCH SOURCES

- i. *At the time of submission of the application, applicants must demonstrate either cash-on-hand or commitments (or a combination thereof) toward meeting 50 percent their first year matching funds, based on the amount of Federal grant funds applied for.*
- ii. *In addition to the match eligibility criteria, the Corporation will evaluate the extent to which you have a combination of cash-on-hand or commitments to meet the full match requirements, and whether your organization will be able to provide financial resources for your SIF program beyond the minimum required match.*

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 budget portion of the applicant's narrative exceeded the requirements outlined in the SIF NOFA and guidelines on cost-effectiveness, which led us to give the applicant a rating of Strong for cost-effectiveness and budget adequacy. This budget identified a diverse pool of non-federal funders, offers a greater than 50% matching commitments, and a strong ability to leverage existing resources. The budget did not provide sufficient information about its fiduciary relationship with Strive, perhaps its most important partner in the implementation of the proposed project.

Significant Strengths

- The applicant provided evidence of a diverse non-federal funding pool, including the participation of local sources. This speaks to the sustainability of the program beyond the tenure of a SIF grant. (Cost Effectiveness A.i.)
- United Way will provide in-kind staff support. This commitment, bolstered by UW's strong leverage—92.5%—is a significant strength that speaks to the SIF guideline of going beyond the specified dollar matching. (Cost Effectiveness B.ii.)
- The applicant has received commitments of more than 50% of match funds (p. 34), surpassing the minimum SIF requirement and suggesting their potential to continue to do so, despite their location in one of the regions of the country that was hardest hit by the recession. (Cost Effectiveness B.)

Significant Weaknesses

- Strive is the second lead intermediary in the SIF application, but the organization is not referenced in the budget. It is incumbent on the applicant to clarify the fiduciary relationship with what is seemingly their biggest partner in the proposed project. (Cost Effectiveness A.)
- The applicant has requested \$40,000 in federal funds for indirect costs but neglects to delineate exactly how these would be used to manage the grant (p. 34). (Cost Effectiveness A.ii.)

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 United Way of Greater Cincinnati presented an application that, in both Program Design and Organizational Capacity, met, but did not exceed the requirements outlined in the SIF NOFA. While we were impressed by the strategic and financial partnerships in the proposal, the applicant did not provide sufficient information—fiscal or otherwise—about the full nature of all of these relationships, particularly the partnership with Strive. The narrative addressed the rationale behind its geographically based SIF proposal with sufficient data and evidence, but was lacking in its discussion of measurable outcomes, information about its target demographics, the role of its partners (some of whom are evidently involved in both a financial and advisory capacity), and its record of support in the communities they have served for decades.

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.
- 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.

Rank

As a panel, Rank this application in relation to the other applications on your panel. Complete this section only after all applications before your panel have been reviewed and consensus has been achieved on each one. The highest rank is “1”.

Rank:4 of 7 total applications on Panel # 10.

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.
- ✓ 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.

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- ✓ 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.