

<p><i>U.S. Soccer Federation Foundation</i></p> <p><i>1211 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 500</i></p> <p><i>Washington, District of Columbia</i></p>	<p>Application ID: 11SI128151</p>
<p>Please find below comments from five Program Reviewers and two Evaluation Reviewers of your application. Reviewers were not required to reach consensus regarding their comments for this review; therefore, there may be disparate views between Reviewers on the quality of your proposal.</p>	
<p>PROGRAM REVIEW</p>	
<p>I. Program Reviewer 1</p>	
<p>COMMENTS: The applicant, U.S. Soccer Federation Foundation (USSFF), starts by clearly defining who will be targeted (12,000 at-risk youths in grades K-8 in low-income urban communities), and by giving specific statistics on childhood obesity rates. They also clearly define their goal of lowering the BMI of at least 75% of overweight and obese participants. Yet, the applicant does not quantify what a success looks like – that is, they do not identify how much the BMI must be decreased in order to be a success. Additionally, some of the outcomes listed by the applicant appear difficult to measure, for example “improved behavior, self-esteem, and overall happiness.” In terms of subgranting, the applicant gives clear guidelines for requirements of subgrantees which appear to have a reasonable chance for success per the requirements of the NOFO. They also clearly define both the number of subgrantees as well as amount of each subgrant (\$150,000 to as many as 12 programs). The only concern is that the applicant does not clearly demonstrate how they will ensure that each subgrantee will be able to achieve the measurable goals of decreasing BMI in 75% of overweight and obese participants. For technical assistance and support, the applicant describes a clear plan for monitoring and providing resources including workshops on administrative, financial, accounting, and HR models. The applicant has also committed to a long-term relationship per the NOFO with subgrantees by clearly stating they will support subgrantees for a minimum of 5 years beyond the SIF grant period. While the applicant states that they have a detailed process for reporting and accountability from its subgrantees, the narrative does not detail what specifically happens if a subgrantee is not meeting USSFF standards. The applicant demonstrates a clear history of successful grantmaking, including over 600 unique grantees which span more than a decade. This history combined with specific examples of previous successes, including the Urban Soccer Collaborative, give confidence that the applicant will be successful in its program. Finally, they cite specific staff members who possess specific skill sets necessary to be successful in the implementation of the grant, including history in youth development, social change, grantmaking, and soccer in general. The budget design appears to be appropriate for the program design. The discussion of previous costs in operating similar subgranting is convincing. The only concern in the budget is that the applicant does not cite how they have or will attain a diversity of funding sources.</p>	
<p>II. Program Reviewer 2</p>	
<p>COMMENTS: The applicant, U.S. Soccer Federation Foundation (USSFF) clearly articulates a goal of preventing and reducing obesity via its Soccer for Success program, within the Healthy Futures focus area; relevant quantifiable outcomes to assess progress towards this goal are provided. Expansion of an existing program model is proposed, to be implemented with monitored fidelity at each of the subgrantee sites. The applicant has identified five of the six new cities SIF funds would be directed to, and describes these as having particularly high needs. The applicant will select subgrantees based on a number of criteria, including that they be operating in low-income communities but does not describe how, beyond being a basis for qualification, the need of the community will be factored into its criteria. As such, it is difficult to connect the national statistics presented by the applicant with the geographies it will be targeting, or its plans to target within each of these geographies. The applicant at times</p>	

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<p>refers to expanding Soccer for Success from six current cities to 12 through the SIF program; at one point the applicant mentions it is active in five cities, and at other points describes subgranting to 12 entities. It is not clear whether this is 12 entities in 12 cities, essentially replacing existing programs, or 12 in six cities. The applicant requires reviewers to have expertise in youth development programs for low-income communities, but does not specifically describe inclusion of persons with expertise in data and evaluation on review committees. The applicant has assumed responsibility for many criteria the NOFO describes as necessary for the subgrantees, such as proposing a model with at least a preliminary evidence of effectiveness and strong community relationships. The applicant has identified 30 programs that have the capacity to meet match requirements, and the applicant indicates these will be invited to compete. The applicant does not indicate whether these have all met a preliminary level of effectiveness, but as they will be implementing the applicants model, which has preliminary evidence, this is not a direct concern. However, it is unclear whether this constitutes pre-selection of subgrantees and a lack of openness of process, or whether the applicant simply is demonstrating that, in fact, it will be possible to find subgrantees who meet eligibility criteria. The applicant has an established history of national grantmaking through competitive processes, and describes several initiatives that have gone to scale in detail. The most successful of these, as evaluated by third party researchers, have then been used to inform new initiatives, including the proposed SIF program. This is evidence of their ability to effectively select, support, and evaluate grants, as well as their ability to use data to drive programming decisions. The applicant describes several ongoing research projects related to its soccer programming demonstrating an established ability to work with data and evaluation at the level of rigor required by the SIF program. The applicant has administered Federal grants for several Federal agencies. The Board of the USSFF has designated funds to provide the full needed match for the applicant. No additional funds beyond the 1:1 match are being sought. Subgrantees will need to provide slightly more than a 1:1 match of SIF funds, effectively increasing the applicant's match slightly. The applicant provided a clear, specific and reasonable description of all costs necessary for this project.</p>	
<p>III. Program Reviewer 3</p> <p>COMMENTS: The applicant clearly identifies the geographic targets involving 15 cities nationwide. The applicant is clear on naming and describing its target issue which is healthy futures and articulates a specific focus on reducing childhood obesity rates. The applicant provides a clear and comprehensive plan for carrying out a competitive subgrant selection process that builds on 15 years of experience in awarding \$55 million to 600 organizations across the United States. The applicant provides a detailed time-table and plan for how they would carry out a competitive subgrant selection if awarded funds from SIF. The applicant clearly identifies specific measurable outcomes as evidenced by their plan for pre-and post-fitness "PACER" tests, the use of BMI scores among other planned metrics to measure outcomes. The applicant details how it will provide technical assistance and support for their selected subgrantee portfolio as it details workshops it will provide along with a network of practice (Urban Soccer Coalition), an annual symposium and one-on-one consulting. The applicant provides details regarding their senior management team and organizational structure suggesting they have both the experience and structure to assure success. The applicant provides evidence of both experience and capacity to successfully implement their proposed evaluation plan based upon their prior 15 year history of grantmaking and oversight of subgrantees.</p>	
<p>IV. Program Reviewer 4</p>	

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<p>COMMENTS: The applicant demonstrates a thorough understanding of the communities that it is proposing to serve, and provides a thorough description of the unique characteristics of the target population. It also provides a clear and comprehensive plan that is appropriate and responsive to the identified communities and target population, as well as potential sub grantees. The applicant clearly demonstrates that its service delivery methodology and proposed selection of sub grantees is appropriate and responsive to the identified needs of the community and the target population. It also thoroughly demonstrates formal and informal collaboration and coordination of services with other youth serving agencies. Finally, the applicant's senior management team is competent and well qualified to carry out the program, as proposed.</p>	
<p>V. Program Reviewer 5</p> <p>COMMENTS: This is a strong proposal that offers a good definition of the problem that they seek to address and provides good evidence about the potential positive impact of the Soccer for Success model that they would support with the SIF investment. The main weaknesses are that their use of data and their argument is not always entirely clear and persuasive and shifts between focusing on very specific health impacts and much broader, and less quantified, youth development aims, and the model that they propose to use has not yet been fully evaluated.</p>	
<p>EVALUATION REVIEW</p>	
<p>VI. Evaluation Reviewer 1</p> <p>COMMENTS: This proposal clearly builds on a successful program that has already demonstrated impact. The applicant has a full suite of measurement tools to measure the relevant indicators that they have identified. All of the measures are validated and informed by experts in the field. The evaluation builds on experience from an existing study of the impact of Soccer for Success (SfS) in Houston that has established the methodology and preliminary evidence of the program's impact. The applicant anticipates that subgrantees will need technical assistance and describes how they will provide workshops, symposiums and additional tailored technical assistance to help subgrantees gather data and evidence of impact. The anticipated technical assistance includes a module about Developing Successful Program Evaluation. The proposal does not clearly specify the level of evidence that the applicant anticipates achieving and is not clear how much assistance they anticipate grantees will need to provide the evidence.</p>	
<p>VII. Evaluation Reviewer 2</p> <p>COMMENTS: While admitting that there is not a great deal of determinative study evidence to support its theory of change, the applicant demonstrates a strong track record in investing in and using evidence of effectiveness of its (SfS) program. The</p>	

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<p>applicant's theory of change for this proposal is based on appropriate citations to evidence of the SCORE program, on which it is modeled. On the other hand, the applicant's use of qualitative data – a good thing – is weakened by not providing any analysis of the overall data set but merely cites a “sample” of data, all positive. The applicant indicates how it developed the SfS program over a number of years of steady learning and improvement on the basis of quantitative measures. Several apposite studies are cited. When citing studies, however, the applicant does not consistently indicate the standard of evidence in the studies. The applicant does not provide sufficient detail regarding performance management metrics or constituent satisfaction. The applicant states its commitment to providing support to its subgrantees in evaluation and presents a clear plan to do so. The applicant profiles a strong Board, staff and consultant capacity to provide to subgrantees. The applicant does not adequately demonstrate, however, how it has used evidence to build grantee capacity in the past. The applicant does not demonstrate an appreciation of the challenges to facilitate learning and exchange across the cohort of subgrantees and other stakeholders by indicating what data are most relevant for this purpose as well as listing useful practices for the exchange of experience. No mention is made, for example, of using benchmarking to facilitate exchange and learning.</p>	