

Applicant Feedback Summary

2015 Social Innovation Fund Grant Competition

(Program and Evaluation Reviewers)

Legal Applicant: Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City

Applicant ID: 15SI172343

Project Name: Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC SIF 2015

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewer's Summary Comments:

PROGRAM REVIEW

Strengths:

The applicant lists its approach to address mental health needs within the New York City boundaries. The theory of change is clear "expanding the provision of mental health services and reducing barriers to access will increase positive mental health treatment outcomes and increase client's ability to reach their other targeted social service program goals."

The types of organizations in which the applicant will invest are community based organizations in New York City. Value-added technical assistance provided through the applicant to the subrecipients is outlined and elaborated upon (adoption of program model; financial management and federal compliance; match fundraising; data driven management; and partnership development).

The applicant is a current Social Innovation Fund (SIF) recipient and provides a description of how the proposed SIF project is distinct from the existing Social Innovation Fund program (national scope; and objective to increase savings among low-income families).

The description of selection of subrecipients is clear and correlates with the rationale and approach proposed (number of subawards; range of subawards; criteria to be used for selection; timeframe for selection and implementation).

The applicant selection process outlined has the propensity to identify sub-recipients that have the ability to implement SIF objectives.

The applicant demonstrates significant capacity to implement the proposed subawards, evidenced by experience and history (existing SIF award 2010).

The applicant demonstrates the ability to manage programs that lead to positive outcomes. The applicant also demonstrates experience, accomplishments, and outcomes operating programs in the area of the proposed program (anti-poverty programs; sector focused workforce strategies; and oversight of existing health care operations in New York City).

The applicant has extensive experience related to evaluation, continuous improvement, and compliance. Previous experience includes an existing SIF (2010). The organizational budget, along with the percentage represented with the proposed program, is clearly stated. The experience, qualifications, and capacity of staff supports the ability to effectively implement the proposed program. The applicant has a system in place to maintain a grant program compliant with federal grant requirements.

The applicant describes how they will ensure compliance with CNCS National Service Criminal History requirements. The applicant provides a demonstrated commitment to a long term relationship with subrecipients, which includes short and long term objectives. For example, the applicant commits to leveraging resources for funding sources, enhancement of existing revenue streams, and seeking additional collaborative partnerships.

The applicant demonstrates significant prior experience setting and implementing goals with recipients (contracts; fiscal oversight; and successful implantation of programs).

The applicant demonstrates experience with evaluating grantee performance. For example, the applicant states they work with a pool of nine nationally recognized evaluation firms.

The applicant provides clear outline of the technical assistance being offered to subrecipients that will play a vital role in supplying the subrecipient with support and sustainability including in-person site visits; regular conference calls; webinars; training; design papers; manuals; staff guidance; protocols and systems, and data collection.

The applicant includes a specific plan for building subrecipient capacity to achieve scaling, evaluation and other key program goals.

The applicant demonstrates its commitment to continued investment priorities, beyond the life of this grant, including objectives such as identifying funding sources, enhancement of existing revenue sources, and increase collaborative partnerships.

The applicant demonstrates prior experience in achieving substantial non-federal funds, including projects the NYC project, which engaged the business community and community based organizations to work towards achieving common goals and objectives.

The applicant provides a description of the match already committed (2 million dollars) and a plan to secure the total non-federal cash match required.

The applicant has a plan for assisting subrecipients with securing their required match through grant writing support, collaborative partnership development, and accessing added mental health through Medicaid where appropriate.

The applicant presents compelling statistical evidence to support the premise that unmet mental health diagnosis and lack of treatment pose barriers for the already high-risk clients (e.g., low income individuals, the uninsured, and those on public insurance) that seek assistance from Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in the geographical area of

New York City.

The applicant provides compelling evidence of its ability to successfully support the proposed program's implementation and outcomes by including a quantified and comprehensive description of its longevity in the community, accomplishments, outcomes, oversight, and experience in conducting and engaging in a coordinated evaluative processes.

The applicant thoroughly describes the experience, qualifications and capacity of the staff and partners to effectively implement and provide oversight to the proposed program, including compliance with and adherence to federal and specific Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) policy requirements.

The applicant includes a description of a SIF-specific Risk Assessment tool used prior to making sub-recipient awards and as a regular monitoring tool, which identifies appropriate risk indicators related to sub-recipient organization, staffing, programmatic, financial, and compliance issues.

The applicant provides a list of the match sources that have already been committed, which include \$250,000 from the Perelman Family and Chapman Perelman Foundations; \$250,000 from the Benificus Foundation; \$350,000 from the Center for Economic Opportunity (unrestricted city tax levy); and \$150,000 from Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City (applicant unobligated cash-on-hand).

The applicant clearly outlines a need for this project and connects it to the issue.

The collaborative approach to this SIF award allows for long term partnerships.

The collaborative is currently managing a 2010 SIF award and has extensive experience in grant making, program support, evaluation, etc.

The applicant raised \$1 million dollar already to comply with the federal match requirements.

Weaknesses:

The applicant states that it is a geographically based approach, however, the supporting evidence suggest it is more aligned with an issue based application related to mental health services "meet widespread unmet mental health needs by delivering services at New York City Community Based Organizations".

While the applicant statistical data is related to general mental health issues at the state and national level, the data provided is missing critical demographic information for their target area (income; family size; race; education; and targeted mental health data which includes adults and children).

While measurable outcomes are provided (improved mental health outcomes; and improved social service outcomes), they are vague and difficult to measure or quantify.

The applicant does not include or demonstrate inefficiencies with current efforts to address mental health issues in the targeted area.

It is not clear if the applicant is utilizing Strategy A (making case that evidenced-based solutions exist and are to be

replicated herein) or Strategy B (the solutions they are proposing are innovative and likely to lead to positive outcomes). While they include references to three studies which support their strategy for co-locating services to improve mental health outcomes, the studies focus were on geriatric patients and children, of which neither are noted as target populations within this proposal. Furthermore, they cite a study that states co-location, such as proposed within this application, have been shown to be inefficient and problematic.

Given that the applicant does not provide a clear objective regarding Strategy A or Strategy B, it is unclear if they will select subrecipients suitable for positive outcomes, or whether its related to innovative solutions or building upon the pre-defined intervention of co-locating mental health services.

The plan for growing effective subrecipient program models is vague and not directly linked with the applicant's theory of change.

The applicant does not include a specified plan for building subrecipient capacity to develop compliance with federal grant management systems.

There is reference to evaluation capacity as to how the applicant will monitor subrecipients for compliance and for progress towards goals, however it lacks detail.

The applicant commits to implementing a strategy for sustainability, but does not provide sufficient details. The budgeted amount for contractual and consultant services is disproportionately high (\$1,533,280).

The demographics of the targeted population are not clearly described.

The budget line item for contractual and consultant fees for evaluation and technical assistance services is exceptionally high.

There is not a clear plan with specific contingencies for sustainability of the program model after the grant cycle.

The plan for sustainability, the technical assistance to be provided around fundraising, and the evaluation plan lacked specificity.

EVALUATION REVIEW

Strengths:

Overall, the applicant presents a comprehensive evaluation plan that will meet the SIF requirements of at least moderate level of evidence. The applicant will utilize a mixed method and multi-tiered evaluation strategy consisting of an implementation study, a cost effectiveness assessment, as well as a quasi-experimental participant impact study. The quasi-experimental study will involve the simultaneous testing of several interventions which will be compared to alternative interventions. This quasi-experimental design will employ rigorous statistical analyses to estimate effectiveness and impact, generating a moderate level of evidence. The applicant references relevant studies that highlight the evidence behind each mental health intervention, with documentation supporting preliminary evidence based for the effectiveness of their integration. The applicant provides a thorough description of assistance to be provided to sub-grantees that includes adapting the Connection to Care model, data driven management, client intake and service flow, as well as establishing common metrics and definitions to be measured. Also, the applicant presents

a thorough description of the evidence that will be utilized to select an evaluation partner, which is in alignment with the definition of the NOFA. The applicant also specifies that the evaluation partner must have substantial experience in implementing science research, client level outcome studies, as well as cost studies. This demonstrates the applicant thoroughly understands the complexity of the proposed project and the multi-faceted evaluation approach required to assess the project's effectiveness. Finally, the applicant strongly demonstrates experience and proven track record in conducting evaluation projects. As an example, evidence from a replication study on employment is informing the reform of New York City's workforce system. In a similar study, findings revealed an increase in employment outcomes for public housing residents.

The applicant provides a well-documented process to ensure implementation of a rigorous evaluation strategy. Strengths include, the evidence provided that the applicant can implement a rigorous evaluation strategy (for example, a randomized control trial), clear criteria for selection of an external evaluation team through a competitive process, and the use of data to make decisions about program scale-up and program closure.

This applicant will be able to build on the experience gained from its 2010 Social Innovation Fund grant; the ability to work collaboratively with partners, as well as coordinate with multiple subgrantees to achieve substantial gains in performance of both the subgrantees and the overall program. This application addresses comprehensive evaluation strategies, methodologies, and planned outcomes. Their intent to issue a request for proposal to identify a nationally recognized external evaluator with experience in healthcare issues bodes well for the proposed program.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide detailed information on the quasi-experimental evaluation study procedures, which makes it difficult to assess threats to the internal and external validity of the proposed study.

While the applicant purports to use several evidence-based evaluations and identifies those evaluations, the applicant does not provide data to substantiate the evaluations rising to the level of being "evidence-based." The applicant makes too many generalizations. One cannot get a sense of a dimension of outcome measure; that is, what might be the baseline or starting point and what is the outcome objective – a 10% or 20% gain?