

MEMORANDUM

TO: Aryeh Neier

FROM: Ann Beeson; Raquiba LaBrie; and EOF Staff

DATE: July 17, 2009

RE: EQUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY FUND DOCKET II

The Equality and Opportunity Fund (EOF) embraces US Programs' grantmaking in the areas of racial justice, immigrant rights, LGBTQ rights, and gender justice. It also includes three special initiatives: Immigration Innovation; the Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative (NSI); and the Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA).

Attached please find the EOF grant recommendations for Docket II of 2009.

Racial Justice

In evaluating how to strengthen EOF's racial justice grantmaking, staff has taken stock of the existing cohort of racial justice grantees and made a few adjustments. First, EOF has reduced the number of university-based think tanks funded through the racial justice portfolio. Second, as reflected in our strategic plan, EOF has begun to apply an intersectional analysis of inequality and discrimination that links racial justice advocacy to other equal opportunity advocacy and emphasizes the shared fate all Americans have in supporting equal opportunity policies. Third, EOF plans to develop a comprehensive grantmaking strategy that moves the racial justice field beyond the black/white paradigm and encourages multi-racial racial justice advocacy.

A number of existing racial justice grantees stand out as important allies and leaders capable of supporting and strengthening EOF's newly refined mission and the work of racial justice advocates nationally. Two of those grantees are recommended for funding in this docket. They are the **Applied Research Center (ARC)** and the **Kirwan Institute**, two racial justice think tanks whose work is closely connected to the concerns of on-the-ground advocates. Both ARC and Kirwan are recognized field leaders that support a range of policy advocates in advancing racial justice through policy analysis, research, and up-to-date reporting. Both collaborate with and support multiple fields beyond the racial justice field. And both approach racial justice questions with the intention of highlighting the shared stake all Americans have in racial equality and equal opportunity.

Because of their demonstrated track record, EOF has decided to treat ARC and Kirwan as EOF "anchor" organizations and to provide each with three-year general operating support grants.

EOF also recommends renewed support to the **National Legal Aid and Defender Association's Race Equity Advocacy Project** (the Project), which focuses on strengthening the civil legal aid community's commitment to racial justice. The Project grew out of the earlier Project for the Future of Equal Justice, which was funded by the Program on Law and Society's Access to Justice Program. Having funded the Project and its predecessor since 1997, staff believes it is an appropriate time to wind down OSI support. The Project has secured Ford Foundation funding to promote stronger collaborations between civil legal aid lawyers and public defenders, and is in a strong position to secure other funding. Accordingly, staff has communicated that EOF does not intend to renew funding in 2010.

Immigration Innovation

EOF Board advisors have stressed the need to engage faith-based organizations to strengthen equal opportunity advocacy across EOF's core issue areas and special initiatives. One of the Immigration Innovation grants recommended in this docket focuses exclusively on supporting local faith-based networks to mobilize around immigrant rights and immigration reform with the intention that these local networks can later be utilized to respond to other social justice issues. The recommended grant is to **Church World Services (CWS)**, which serves as an umbrella organization representing 35 Protestant denominations. CWS will focus on the following regions: 1) Ohio/Pennsylvania/Michigan; 2) South Carolina/North Carolina/Virginia; and 3) Washington/Oregon/Idaho. Priorities and focus states were determined by closely working with the Reform Immigration for America campaign (formerly the Four Pillars Campaign) and the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, both of which are supported by OSI.

The second recommended Immigration Innovation grant is to **America's Voice Education Fund (AV)**, which is headed by Frank Sharry, former Executive Director of the National Immigration Forum. Support for AV will strengthen four programs that are pivotal to increasing public awareness and changing the debate on immigration policy reform. The programs include: 1) recruitment of law enforcement leaders willing to speak out for immigration reform; 2) high-level on-camera media training with key spokespeople; 3) "grass tops" media efforts in key local areas in need of public education; and 4) continuation of the "Family Unity" public awareness outreach. This grant furthers the overall goals of the Reform Immigration for America Campaign, in particular the policy, field and communications pillars.

There are no immigrant rights grants recommended in this docket.

LGBTQ Rights

A number of the recommended LGBTQ rights grants exemplify the intersectional approach EOF seeks to foster among equal opportunity advocates. **Immigration Equality** is a national organization that works to end discrimination against LGBTQ and HIV-positive people under U.S. immigration law. It also helps to obtain asylum for

individuals persecuted in their home country based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or HIV status. By working in close coalition with LGBTQ rights and immigrant rights advocates, it helps to build bridges and cultivate a shared fate agenda across these movements.

The **Sylvia Rivera Law Project** (SRLP) engages in legal advocacy on behalf of transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming low-income people and people of color; advocates for transgender inclusion in and enforcement of anti-discrimination laws; and represents transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming people who are incarcerated. SRLP is explicit in addressing the ways in which race, gender, and sexual orientation overlap to compound discrimination and inequality. Its past legal victories include a case establishing a transgender parent's right to visit her children, and another holding that discrimination against transgender youth in foster care violates New York State's human rights law.

The recommended grant to **Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders** (GLAD) will support critical legal advocacy for marriage equality as well as efforts to ensure full equality for transgender people and to ensure that LGBTQ youth are treated fairly and equally in schools, child welfare institutions, and the juvenile justice system.

Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative

As noted in the EOF strategic plan, while on a national level foreclosure rates already exceed those during the Great Depression, they are nearly twice as high in communities of color.¹ In response, NSI has prioritized advocacy strategies that fill critical gaps in foreclosure prevention policies and programs, particularly those that address the needs of the most vulnerable populations (people of color, immigrants, and low-income families). The recommended grant to the **National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development** (National CAPACD) addresses this priority by strengthening the advocacy capacity of communities hit hardest by the housing crisis, with a particular focus on Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. National CAPACD will advocate for equity in housing recovery efforts, federal foreclosure prevention programs that are targeted to low-income borrowers of color, and enforcement of fair lending and community reinvestment laws.

NSI also recognizes that the current foreclosure crisis implicates core open society concerns at the heart of U.S. Programs' values and mission. The crisis has been driven by what could be characterized as some of the most "closed" features of U.S. society: deeply rooted racial disparities in wealth and access to wealth-building institutions; feeble legal protections for immigrants and low-income consumers excluded from the financial mainstream; and opacity and lack of oversight in the financial sector. The recommended grant to the **National Fair Housing Alliance** (NFHA) seeks to restore transparency and accountability to the financial sector by expanding fair lending compliance in foreclosure prevention efforts, improving credit access for underserved

¹ See United for a Fair Economy, *The Silent Depression: State of the Dream 2009*, available at http://www.faireconomy.org/news/state_of_the_dream_2009_the_silent_depression

markets, and promoting fair lending and civil rights compliance and enforcement among government agencies.

The recommended grant to **The Reinvestment Fund** (TRF) will support evaluation of the Philadelphia Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion program, which was created by the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County in response to the rising number of foreclosures in the city. The Philadelphia court diversion program is the “poster child” of local responses to the foreclosure crisis, but little is known about its effectiveness or limitations. The recommended evaluation will inform and strengthen the development of local and statewide responses to the foreclosure crisis being developed around the country.

Campaign for Black Male Achievement

The Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA) is playing an increasingly important role in strengthening philanthropic initiatives to improve life outcomes for black males. The recommended renewal grant to the **Twenty First Century Foundation** will support its Black Men and Boys Initiative, which seeds black men and boys organizing advocacy in six target cities throughout the country. CBMA’s support focuses on coalition advocacy in Chicago and New Orleans. OSI support provided last year is yielding powerful results. In Chicago, organizations that previously operated in isolation are sharing resources and collaborating on campaigns addressing juvenile justice, youth violence, high school dropout rates, and high levels of youth unemployment. In New Orleans, a loose coalition of four grassroots juvenile justice groups has grown into a 25-organization coalition challenging lack of opportunity for black men and boys.

The recommended grant to the **Association of Black Foundation Executives** (ABFE) will strengthen its role as an information clearinghouse for philanthropy on improving outcomes for black males. Through surveys, data collection, and convenings, ABFE will help encourage funders to invest in black male achievement. As a membership organization representing blacks in philanthropy and as an authoritative voice on social justice concerns affecting U.S. blacks, it is well-positioned to reach funders interested in investing in this area.

The final CBMA recommended grant is to the Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ). It is a general operating support grant for \$4 million over four years. HCZ’s efforts to serve an entire neighborhood in Central Harlem comprehensively and at scale have achieved important gains, most notably in the area of education. In math, its Promise Academy middle school has eliminated the achievement gap between its black students and the New York City average for white students. HCZ also reaches adult residents through a number of programs. Its neighborhood revitalization program trains residents to be community organizers and to advocate for home ownership of city-owned properties. It maintains a Single Stop site that provides free legal services, financial and credit counseling, and a self-sufficiency calculator that assesses family eligibility for public benefits. HCZ’s Baby College has received a great deal of favorable attention. It offers a parenting course and weekly home visits for caregivers.

The proven impact of HCZ has led the Obama administration to identify replication of the HCZ model as one of the White House's leading approaches to alleviating urban poverty and promoting educational equity. Given the increased scrutiny directed at HCZ at a time when it is struggling to address decreased funding resulting from the economic crisis, staff recommends substantial support to ensure it continues to produce high-quality services and results.

Staff is sending the HCZ grant recommendation to George Soros for his approval and to confirm that the grant should be paid for out of the Chairman's grants.

We look forward to meeting with you next Friday to discuss this docket and any other issues pertaining to the Equality and Opportunity Fund.