

MEMORANDUM

TO: Aryeh Neier
FROM: Ann Beeson; Raquiba LaBrie; and EOF Staff
DATE: April 10, 2009
RE: EQUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY FUND DOCKET I

The Equality and Opportunity Fund (EOF) embraces US Programs' grantmaking in the areas of racial justice, immigrant rights, LGBTQ rights, and women's rights. It also includes the work of two targeted initiatives: the Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative (NSI) and the Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA).

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

Racial Justice

In the past, U.S. Programs' racial justice grantmaking has focused heavily on supporting academic scholarship and advocacy research outlining why a structural lens is appropriate to analyze the cumulative effects of racism in the U.S. This approach has born fruit—there is increasing evidence that a range of advocates OSI supports and fellow funders are adopting a structural analysis of barriers to equality and opportunity. Building from this success, EOF is planning to scale back our support of academic research and analysis in this area and to devote more resources to advocacy that directly challenges structural inequality.

In this docket, we are funding three groups that rely principally on litigation to challenge structural racism. In future dockets, we plan to increase support for grassroots organizing that challenges knotty structural issues.

The recommended grant to the **Native American Rights Fund**, a core EOF grantee, will provide general operating support to strengthen its litigation and broader field coordination efforts in defending tribal sovereignty and other Indian rights. The recommended grant to the **Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights** will support its ongoing work in defending the constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act (VRA). For the past two years, the Lawyers' Committee has represented the defendants in *North Austin Municipal Utility District No. 1 v. Gonzales*, which challenges the constitutionality of the VRA requirement that certain jurisdictions obtain federal pre-clearance before implementing changes to voting procedures. This case is currently pending before the U.S. Supreme Court. Oral argument is scheduled for April 29, 2009, with a decision expected in June 2009.

Residential segregation is a thread that runs through much of our racial justice grantmaking. Staff is planning to deepen our grantmaking related to segregation in the contexts of housing and schools. In the current docket, we recommend renewed support to the **Citizens' Planning and Housing Association of Baltimore (CPHA)**, to continue its work related to *Thompson v. HUD*, a lawsuit filed by the Maryland ACLU in 1995 that seeks to remedy over seven decades of public housing segregation in Baltimore. U.S. District Court Judge Marvin Garbis is expected to decide

the remedy phase of this case this year. With renewed support, CPHA will coordinate advocacy, enforcement and communications efforts that stem from the case.

The remaining racial justice grants to two think tanks – the **African American Policy Forum (AAPF)** and **Jamestown Project (Jamestown)** – are terminal. As mentioned above, EOF plans to scale back its funding of university-based think tanks and free up resources to support direct advocacy. While the work of both AAPF and Jamestown is important in shaping public debate on racial justice and broader social justice concerns, staff has communicated to each that we do not plan to renew their grants next year.

Immigrant Rights

All of EOF's immigrant rights grantmaking in this docket intersect with the priorities of other U.S. Programs funds or campaigns. The recommended grant to the **Immigrant Legal Resource Center** is a joint grant with the Criminal Justice Fund to support the Defending Immigrants Partnership to prevent the deportation of low-income non-citizens accused of crimes by providing defense counsel with the training, resources, and tools needed to defend them against the immigration law consequences of a criminal conviction. The recommended grant to **Breakthrough** will be split equally among EOF, the National Security and Human Rights Campaign and the Strategic Opportunities Fund. Led by a strong staff including Mallika Dutt, Breakthrough has emerged as a national and international leader in the use of new media and popular culture to advance social change.

LGBTQ Rights

The recommended line-up of grants advancing LGBTQ rights is directly responsive to the U.S. Programs Board's request that we increase our investment in efforts to protect and defend the rights of the most marginalized groups within the LGBTQ community. To varying degrees, each recommended grant in the LGBTQ docket addresses the particular concerns of LGBTQ people of color or transgender people.

The recommended grant to the **Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice** will support its re-granting to LGBTQ groups with limited access to traditional sources of funding, particularly people of color-led groups. The grant to **Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues** will support for its Racial Equity Campaign to offer matching grants to LGBTQ public foundations and community foundations with LGBTQ field of interest funds to strengthen the capacity and leadership development of LGBTQ people of color organizations. With renewed general operating support, the **National Center for Lesbian Rights** will continue its first-rate legal advocacy in advancing LGBTQ civil rights with some targeted attention to LGBTQ immigrants, LGBTQ people who are incarcerated, and transgender people. The **National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)** and the **Transgender Law Center (TLC)** are both recommended for renewed general support. **NCTE** has distinguished itself as an effective collaborator across group and issue lines with its work on identity documents that implicate the privacy rights not only of transgender people, but immigrants as well. **TLC** is a California statewide legal advocacy group that focuses on the overwhelming discrimination that transgender people face in virtually every institutional context.

A general support grant to the **National Black Justice Coalition** will strengthen its ongoing efforts to increase the visibility and political engagement of openly gay African Americans on civil rights issues. Staff will explore connections between the work of NBJC and the Campaign for Black Male Achievement.

The recommended grant to the **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force** advances the EOF goals of strengthening and expanding policies that advance LGBTQ rights as well as the Seize the Day Fund's goals of addressing the most challenging public policy issues at the federal level. With a combination of general operating support and project support, the Task Force will continue to provide staffing, financial support and expertise to support local and state policy advocacy campaigns. It will also work with national coalition partners to develop action plans focused on federal policy changes that are low-hanging fruit and can be accomplished by rule or regulation.

Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative

Over the past several months, NSI staff has explored creative connections between our work addressing the local repercussions of the foreclosure crisis and other U.S. Programs grantmaking areas, such as the Criminal Justice Fund's efforts to eliminate employment barriers faced by formerly incarcerated people and the Campaign for Black Male Achievement's emerging focus on creating sustainable employment opportunities for black males. In particular, we have been exploring opportunities to partner with prison reentry programs to employ formerly incarcerated individuals in neighborhood public improvement and property rehabilitation efforts in areas with high concentrations of foreclosures.

In late 2008, NSI provided a matching grant to the **Center for New York City Neighborhoods (CNYCN)** for a demonstration project that will use a transitional employment model to prevent deterioration in Jamaica, Queens, a neighborhood with high rates of foreclosure. In this docket, we recommend a grant that builds on the work of the Queens pilot. The proposed grant to the **Local Initiatives Support Corporation** will support the design and launch of workforce development programs in neighborhoods with concentrated numbers of foreclosures in Detroit, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, and Los Angeles. The ultimate goal is to cull best practices to benefit communities across the country.

As the mortgage and foreclosure crisis has unfolded, a pressing need has emerged to address the unprecedented volume of bank-owned foreclosed properties. The **National Community Stabilization Trust (NCST)** was formed by four leading housing and community development intermediaries to address this very issue. NSI's recommended general support grant to NCST will support its efforts to coordinate the transfer of foreclosed and abandoned properties from financial institutions to local housing organizations in order to facilitate the productive reuse of property and the stabilization of distressed neighborhoods.

Another problem that has evaded easy answers in the current foreclosure crisis is the pervasive refusal of mortgage holders and services to modify unsustainable mortgages. NSI's recommended grant to the **National Consumer Law Center (NCLC)** will respond to one dimension of this problem by promoting the use of effective mediation procedures in mortgage foreclosure cases and documenting effective loan modification models.

The recommended grant to the **National Housing Law Project (NLHLP)** will protect the rights of one of the most vulnerable populations impacted by the foreclosure crisis – renters. Renters displaced by foreclosure are more likely to be low-income households and families of color. NLHLP will advocate for expanded protections to prevent displacement of renters. It will also advise advocates on the most effective strategies for using federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds. Recognizing the crisis is also driving dramatic increases in homelessness around the country, staff recommends a grant to the **National Law Center for Homelessness and Poverty** to advocate for the expansion and replication of model homeless prevention programs.

Finally, the recommended grant to the **Urban Institute** will support empirical research on the impacts of foreclosures on children and families by linking property-level foreclosure data to public school data in Baltimore, New York City, and Washington, D.C. To date, there has been no systematic research quantifying the negative consequences of foreclosure specifically for children. The Urban Institute findings will not only highlight the needs for services for these children and their families, but also allow policy makers to make more informed decisions.

Campaign for Black Male Achievement

The Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA) has two important grants on this docket. The first is to the **Center for Urban Families (the Center)** in Baltimore. The Center proposes to implement the *Advancing Responsible Fatherhood Initiative*, a joint effort between the Center, the Columbia University Center for Research on Fathers, Children and Family Well-Being, and the National Fatherhood Leaders Group (NFLG). Using the Center's Baltimore-focused work as a laboratory for testing best practices in responsible fatherhood programming, the Columbia partner will conduct empirical analysis of outcomes for participants in the Center's programs. NFLG will disseminate the research findings to relevant social service providers, policy advocacy groups, and government agencies. OSI funding will also support the Center's national advocacy on policy issues related to the responsible fatherhood movement.

The second grant provides CBMA with an opportunity to partner with the Democracy and Power Fund to support the **Young People's Project (YPP)**. Founded in Mississippi as an outgrowth of the Algebra Project, YPP is now a national organization with programs in ten states. OSI funding will support the development of a Mississippi statewide network of math literacy workers and youth organizers with a particular focus on improving educational outcomes and leadership development of black males.

We look forward to meeting with you on April 17 to discuss the docket and any other issues pertaining to the Equality and Opportunity Fund.