

Memorandum

To: Aryeh Neier
From: Ann Beeson
Re: Seize the Day Fund Docket
Date: April 6, 2009

Enclosed are three write-ups recommending grants through our Seize the Day Fund. We are working to move these special funds into the field as quickly as possible to ensure that organizations can take advantage of this transformational moment. To that end, rather than set up separate docket meetings, we propose two processes for your consideration of grant recommendations for the Seize the Day Fund. First, we will send up Seize the Day dockets along with the other USP dockets already scheduled in your calendar. The USP docket meetings scheduled for this year are March 20, April 17, June 19, July 24, September 18, October 16, and November 6. (As you will recall, you approved the first Seize the Day Fund grants at the March 20th docket meeting.)

Second, we will send you additional dockets with Seize the Day Fund grant recommendations on three other dates this year: April 6, May 15, and August 21. To ease the burden on your calendar, we have not scheduled in-person meetings for these three special dockets. Rather, we suggest that you review the dockets and then let us know whether you are comfortable approving the grants without a meeting, have questions we could answer via email, or would like to meet with us to discuss the recommendations.

Assuming this process meets with your approval, we look forward to your thoughts and questions on the attached recommendations, summarized below:

Expanding public participation in policy efforts

Arabella Legacy Fund, \$100,000, 1 year project support for Unity 2009

This grant would support the Arabella Legacy Fund, a 501c3 public charity that serves as the fiscal sponsor for Unity 2009 c3 activities. Unity '09, the newly emerging national issue field table, is a coalition of issue and constituency organizations that seek to: 1) build a powerful alliance to advance social justice; 2) discuss and prioritize issues of interest; and 3) develop public education strategies to engage multiple and diverse constituencies. The Unity '09 c3 table has, to date, lacked faith organization participation and the \$25,000 per organization dues requirement has been prohibitive for many grassroots groups and networks. OSI funding would enable participation in Unity 2009 for five progressive faith-based organizations, including Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, Faith in Public Life, Gamaliel Foundation, and PICO National Network, all current OSI grantees, plus Sojourners. Each of the groups prioritizes expanded public participation, and the issue agendas for each group track more closely to OSI priorities - with a heavy emphasis on confronting structural inequality - than the current Unity '09 table. We recommend Seize the Day Fund support to ensure that faith communities are represented in this emerging national coalition.

Advancing the hardest issues: structural inequality

Center for Social Inclusion, \$500,000 total for 1 year (\$300,000 Seize the Day Fund; \$100,000 Equality and Opportunity Fund; \$100,000 Democracy and Power Fund)

This grant would support CSI's three-part plan to advance structural reforms that achieve equity for communities of color, women, and low-income communities. First, CSI plans to research racial and gender equity in the distribution of federal stimulus dollars in New York and Mississippi. The two states will serve as political and geographic counterpoints that reflect the varying perspectives on the national economy and how to fix it. Second, CSI will engage in empirical research and analysis to identify and effectively frame shared economic and government support needs that cut across lines of race and gender. Third, CSI will convene up to five public intellectuals to serve as a "shadow cabinet" that can articulate and endorse creative policy solutions while being explicit about equity concerns. In addition to strengthening CSI's capacity to address federal policy and structural inequality, this grant will cover CSI's ongoing core support needs.

Ensuring transparency and equity in the economic recovery

USAction Education Fund, Rebuild and Renew America Now, \$500,000 total for 1 year (\$350,000 Seize the Day Fund; \$150,000 Democracy and Power Fund)

This grant would support the Rebuild and Renew America Now, a project led by the DC-based USAction Education Fund, that aims to raise public awareness of the pending federal budget and its crucial impact on reforming housing, healthcare, education, the environment and virtually every other major forthcoming domestic reform effort requiring appropriations. Through its effective national level coalition-building and its organization of state-based grassroots and grassroots groups, Rebuild and Renew America Now is forging what is already the most expansive budget coalition in U.S. history to shape the national dialogue and increase public participation in the battle over the federal budget. This grant follows a project planning grant from the Democracy and Power Fund last fall. It is a coalitional effort with important policy support provided by other OSI grantees, including the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Center for American Progress, and the National Women's Law Center.