

MEMORANDUM

TO: Aryeh Neier
FROM: Ann Beeson, Erlin Ibreck, Laleh Ispahani
DATE: March 3, 2009
RE: Strategic Opportunities Fund/Transparency and Integrity Fund – Out-of-Docket Grant Recommendation

Attached please find one time-sensitive out-of-docket recommendation. The Strategic Opportunities Fund (SOF) and the Transparency and Integrity Fund (TIF) are jointly recommending this grant to provide vital support to a group of key stakeholders in New Orleans that are developing a strategic plan of action to promote accountable and transparent systems of governance in New Orleans. The grant will go to the Greater New Orleans Foundation (GNOF), which will serve as the conduit for re-granting and overseeing the planning process.

The grant to GNOF is time-sensitive because it seeks to build on momentum that catalyzed around several January 2009 meetings in New Orleans between TIF and SOF staff on the one hand, and key local organizations working on transparency issues, as well as with GNOF staff, on the other. OSI staff held a series of meetings focused on three areas: building greater civic support for good governance; enhancing the oversight of revenues and expenditures; and developing additional transparency in information and media. The result of these meetings was a desire by the groups with whom we met to develop a plan to build the civic base to increase public pressure on government, enhance the capacity of key organizations, encourage collaborative approaches, provide a forum in which to identify needed reforms, and to send a strong message to public officials about the need for accountability. Therefore, we propose providing the resources that local civic activists need to research, build networks, and collaborate with local, national and possibly international, partners to design integrated strategies to support the goal of increased transparency and accountability in government.