

**U.S. PROGRAMS  
SEIZE THE DAY  
Summary of Recommended Grants  
November 23, 2009**

**U.S. Programs, SEIZE THE DAY (T1: 21079)**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Requested</b>	<b>Recommended</b>	<b>Term</b>
<b><u>Colorado</u></b>			
Colorado Center on Law & Policy, Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute	\$500,000	\$500,000	2 years
<b><u>Florida</u></b>			
Miami Workers Center	\$497,500	\$452,500	2 years
The Collins Center for Public Policy	\$440,000	\$150,000	2 years
<b><u>New York</u></b>			
The Legal Aid Society	\$200,000	\$100,000	1 year
<b><u>California</u></b>			
California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.	\$499,000	\$329,000	2 years

RECOMMENDED: \$1,531,500

Angel Weir  
Approval Signature

December 4, 2009  
Date

Memorandum

To: Aryeh Neier

From: Ann Beeson, Helena Huang (OSI Consultant), and the Seize the Day Initiative Grantmaking Committee

Date: November 16, 2009

Re: Seize the Day Initiative Special Docket of Recommendations for Funding State Coalitions to Advance Transparency and Equity

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Enclosed please find five grant recommendations from the Seize the Day Initiative. You will be meeting with the Initiative's grantmaking committee, Ann Beeson, Laleh Ispahani, Raquiba LaBrie, Leonard Noisette, Bill Vandenberg, and Helena Huang, on November 23<sup>rd</sup> at 3:00 pm to discuss these recommendations.

Recent American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) developments suggest there will be an increasingly greater role for advocacy at the state level to ensure that citizens have a voice in the allocation of recovery dollars, and that those funds reach communities most in need. Since our last grants committee meeting with you on October 16<sup>th</sup>, the federal government released for the first time information from recipients receiving federal stimulus dollars intended to provide a full accounting of how recovery dollars have been spent to date. As predicted by national advocates and government watchdog groups (many of them OSI grantees) such as the STAR Coalition, PolicyLink, and OMB Watch, both the data reporting process and the information it produced was inconsistent and sufficiently lacking in detail. Even the federal government was quick to acknowledge this first report was a "work in progress," with more adjustments to come.

In fact, this initial setback may have created some new opportunities to improve reporting requirements. With national advocates continuing to push for better reporting standards such as more demographic information of funding recipients while at the same time continuing to praise the integrity and promise of ARRA the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board, the federal agency that oversees ARRA, has begun to consider making some important changes. Some of these changes, for instance, would require the name of subcontractors in addition to primary contractors; would require states to provide demographic information on job recipients, specifically, racial breakdown and zip code, represent precisely the kind of information necessary for advocates to fully track stimulus spending. In another hopeful sign for advocates, Recovery Board Chairman Earl E. Devaney has indicated that in the future, ARRA recipients who fail to submit reports by the mandated deadline will risk public disclosure on the federal government's website.

Ensuring faithful, timely, and accurate reporting, particularly with small agencies at the local levels, will not be easy. State governments and local agencies continue to exercise enormous influence on how stimulus dollars are spent and accounted for. In most instances, local advocacy will be required to apply the precise combination of support,

resources, and pressure to get the job done. This is compounded by the possibility that many of these proposed new reporting requirements could go into effect as early as January 1, 2010. That would create an even greater need for coordinated stimulus advocacy at the state and local levels as a growing number of these agencies would be mandated to fulfill the new reporting requirements before the end of the second quarter in April.

This is precisely the role our State Alliances are designed to serve. In our first round of grantmaking in response to our special Request for Proposals, we recommended funding for state-based alliances working to fulfill the promise of ARRA in six targeted states, including California, New York, Mississippi, Texas, Wisconsin, and Maryland, under a separate process. In this docket you will find five additional state-based alliances and/or projects recommended for funding. Our targeted states included Colorado, Louisiana, and Florida. Again, we used the same process to solicit proposals as we had with our first round: we released the RFP and hosted informational calls in each state for interested applicants, their national allies, and state-based funders. In several instances, again, we facilitated introductions between organizations working in the same state and encouraged groups to partner with those with complementary skills. We received a total of 13 proposals (one from Colorado, five from Louisiana, and seven from Florida).

From Colorado, we received one meritorious proposal comprised of five complementary research and grassroots organizing groups that are connected to an extensive network of state-based organizations. After a thorough review of the budget, we have concluded that the amount recommended does in fact reflect the needs of the Colorado Alliance to do the work proposed and the funds are allocated reasonably among the partner organizations. This is the only proposal we have recommended for funding at the full request of \$500,000 over two years.

In the case of Louisiana, we did not find a single proposal able to demonstrate sufficiently an ability to bridge some of the historical divides that often keep good government organizations and base-building groups from working together, one of our key criteria. After much consideration on the part of USP staff, we decided it would be best not to recommend funding Louisiana through this process, but rather to look for other opportunities to fund much needed capacity in this state.

We received three strong proposals from Florida and recommend two for funding on this docket. The first is a grant to the Miami Workers Center (also recommended for a grant by the SOF for its census work) and its seven partner organizations as our designated "Florida Alliance." This Florida Alliance offers unparalleled credibility and access to key communities of color across the state and an impressive early track record on stimulus-related advocacy. The second is a grant to the Collins Center for Public Policy, an independent think tank, with an expressed interest in supporting community-based efforts. Collins proposes a new partnership with the Florida Office of Economic Recovery, a new state agency appointed to oversee recovery spending in the state, and offers a level of access to government data that none of the other RFP applicants have been able to attain. We see support for Collins as a supplemental grant designed to

strengthen the work of the proposed Florida Alliance as well as to support transparency in government for the state more generally.

Also included in this docket are two strong proposals from our first round of grantmaking proposals. We reserved some funds in order to be able to consider a second grant to some of the larger, more complex states, such as California and New York State. For California, we are recommending funding a second Alliance that will focus on the timely and often neglected interests of low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities in discrete communities within the San Joaquin Valley. For New York State, we propose funding a small team of lawyers from Legal Aid and the Empire Justice Center to provide targeted legal analysis for our recently funded New York State Alliance as a one-year, supplemental grant.

The lead organization is also the fiscal sponsor for each state alliance, and will regrant funds to its partner organizations. The groups are listed below with more detailed descriptions to follow:

- Colorado:** Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute (lead); 9-5 Colorado, FRESC, Progress Now Colorado Education, Colorado Common Cause
  
- Florida:** Miami Workers Center, Research Institute on Social & Economic Policy Florida Immigration Coalition, Florida Legal Services, Power U Center for Social Change, Jobs with Justice/Central and South Florida Chapters, Kirwan Institute, Advancement Project
  
- Florida:** The Collins Center for Public Policy (Supplemental Grant)
  
- New York:** The Legal Aid Society, Empire Justice Center (Supplemental Grant)
  
- California:** California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc, California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, PolicyLink which will not receive additional OSI funding from this grant. (A second Alliance for this state)

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss these recommendations on November 23rd.

**Colorado**

**Name of Organization:**

1. Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute
2. 9-5 Colorado
3. FRESC
4. Progress Now Colorado Education
5. Colorado Common Cause

**Tax Status:**

1. – 5. 501 (c) (3)

**FPOS Grant Description:**

This grant will support five Colorado-based organizations working to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery, specifically focusing on state distribution of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

**Previous OSI Support:**

Yes

**Organization Budget:**

1. \$650,000

**Project Budget:**

\$757,000 over two years

1. \$164,000 for 2009; \$164,000 for 2010
2. \$62,000 for 2009; \$62,000 for 2010
3. \$60,000 for 2009; \$60,000 for 2010
4. \$40,000 for 2009; \$40,000 for 2010
5. \$52,500 for 2009; \$52,500 for 2010

**Major Sources of Support:**

None

**Type of Support:**

Project Support

**Amount Requested:**

\$500,000 over two years

1. \$86,000 over two years
2. \$86,000 over two years
3. \$86,000 over two years

4. \$70,000 over two years
5. \$86,000 over two years

**Amount Recommended:**

\$500,000 over two years through the Seize the Day Fund (21079)

1. \$86,000 over two years
2. \$86,000 over two years
3. \$86,000 over two years
4. \$70,000 over two years
5. \$86,000 over two years

**Term:**

Two years beginning December 1, 2009

**Description of Organizations**

Five complementary research and grassroots organizing groups have come together to form this new Colorado Alliance. They include:

1. Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute (COFPI) is a research policy group, a project of the Colorado Center for Law and Policy, and a member of the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative. Founded in 1996, as both a resource and catalyst, COFPI works for changes in public policy through provision of timely, credible, and accessible fiscal policy analysis, education and advocacy, and coalition building. It will serve as the lead fiscal and research organization for the Colorado Alliance and provide access to ARRA information and analysis. COFPI will also collaborate with its sister research organizations, the Bell Policy Center and Colorado Children’s Campaign, to conduct in-depth analyses of ARRA funding and its impact in key areas such as safety net programs, jobs, and education.

2. 9to5 Colorado is an autonomous statewide chapter (in fact the largest) of 9to5 National Association of Working Women, a national grassroots organization dedicated to defending the rights of low-wage women, women in traditionally female jobs, and those who have experienced employment discrimination. 9-5 Colorado is also a participant in the Economic Recovery and Equal Opportunity Group, an informal network of policy advocacy groups, including some OSI grantees, that is sharing ideas and developing tools to promote equal opportunity and equity in the recovery. Its role within the Alliance is to mobilize its constituency to advocate for greater access to ARRA related jobs and job training programs.

3. FRESC, founded in 2002, is a member of the Partnership for Working Families and as such is dedicated to building strong labor community partnership to support families. Formerly the Front Range Economic Strategy Center, it shortened its name to FRESC in January 2008. As a part of the Colorado Alliance, FRESC will advocate for changes in the weatherization industry to ensure that sustainable jobs go to those who need them most. This strategy is linked to a national campaign founded by the Sierra Club and

Laborers International Union to create and build a new weatherization industry grounded in principles of equity and justice.

4. Progress Now Colorado Education was founded in 2003 to provide a strong, credible voice in advancing progressive solutions to critical community problems. It is an earned and new media organization that leverages emerging web-based technologies, including social networking sites, blogs and YouTube. It is connected to Progress Now with its 12 state affiliates. On behalf of the Alliance, it will be responsible for message development, story writing, and both earned and new media.

5. For 40 years, Colorado Common Cause (CCC) has served as a citizens' lobby group and active leader in the fight for government transparency and accountability as well as increased public participation in the political process. As a partner in the Colorado Alliance, it will synthesize campaign strategy and continue to provide its expertise and experience tracking ARRA spending. In June of 2009, CCC and COFPI joined forces to form the ARRA Accountability Coalition, a group dedicated to working with Colorado's Economic Recovery Accountability Board, the state government agency charged with overseeing ARRA implementation, to advance responsible ARRA spending. CCC will leverage its relationship with the state board and the work of the coalition on behalf of this new Alliance.

#### **Description of Program for which Funding is Sought**

The five key organizations that comprise the Colorado Alliance come from two existing and complementary state-based coalitions. The first coalition, The ARRA Accountability Coalition (AAC), was established this year and includes over twenty-five diverse organizations advocating for more transparent ARRA spending in Colorado. Three key partner groups from this coalition, Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute, Colorado Common Cause, and Progress Now Colorado Education have agreed to join the Alliance. The second existing coalition, the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative (CCOC) is a five-year old partnership of nine grassroots organizing groups based in low and middle income communities and communities of color. This collaborative focuses on equity issues in the state and works to improve programs and policies on a range of issues including immigrant rights, health care, and jobs. Two organizations from this collaborative, 9to5 Colorado and FRESC, have agreed to join the Colorado Alliance and serve as a bridge between the two larger collaborative efforts. This new Alliance offers significant collective credibility and expertise in both transparency and equity funding and, with OSI support, is well equipped to launch and implement a comprehensive campaign to educate and engage citizens and community leaders on the potential of ARRA implementation in the state. This campaign will advocate for transparency at all levels of government and call on decision makers -- from the governor and state legislators to state agency officials -- to support the goal of prioritizing stimulus funding for the benefit of those most in need.

Through a combination of research, organizing and communications strategies, the Colorado Alliance will work to see that federal stimulus dollars in Colorado fulfill the original promise of ARRA and uphold the principles of transparency, accountability, and equity. Alliance partners view ARRA as a unique and timely opportunity to reengage the

public on the role of government and re-imagine a more stable and sustainable state economy. Therefore, the Alliance framed its Seize the Day proposal with an eye toward the longer-term goals of restoring Colorado citizens' confidence in government and methodically building a case for future state tax policy reform.

While the Colorado Alliance has articulated ambitious goals, its collective work is also grounded in a detailed work plan that identifies three specific focus areas:

Safety Net Programs -- In these difficult economic times, a growing number of Colorado families are turning to government programs to meet some of their basic human needs. ARRA provides funding to shore up and expand access to state safety net programs, such as unemployment insurance, Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, etc. Yet, in many instances, state agencies are ill-prepared to leverage these additional funds or may lack the personnel and preexisting mechanisms for distributing stimulus dollars in transparent and equitable ways. Lack of good information or awareness on the part of families most in need is another huge barrier to effective stimulus spending. In response to these challenges as well as opportunities, the Colorado Alliance will analyze specific safety net programs, identify opportunities for the state to leverage additional stimulus dollars, and advocate for policies and practices that can help local government enhance its ability to manage the new federal funds. Through its grassroots partner organizations, it will engage and educate underrepresented communities about potential policy changes due to ARRA funding, how to get involved in the process, and how to tap available resources.

Green Jobs -- In the area of green jobs, the Colorado Alliance will focus on ARRA weatherization funding and jobs for those often excluded from these opportunities. In order to translate this idea into reality, however, targeted local advocacy and organizing will be necessary in Colorado. The Alliance is eager to join forces with other advocates working to advance the idea that government, business, labor, and grassroots communities can partner in creating and implementing programs that increase quality jobs and opportunities in the green industry. Already, Alliance partner organizations have worked with the Governor's Energy Office to draft and adopt a set of principles that underscore the opportunities to create job training programs and ensure that less likely candidates, such as day laborers, immigrants and women, have a chance to compete for these jobs.

Going forward, the Colorado Alliance will identify other green jobs "funding pots." For instance, it plans to work with local agencies to apply for a \$100m Department of Energy ARRA grant that can be used to establish the Denver Pilot Program, a self-financed weatherization model with high quality jobs and access for underrepresented communities. Communicating the impact of these programs will be an integral part of the Alliance's work. Its media partner, Progress Now, will use both traditional and new media technologies to show how ARRA funds are being spent and to tell the compelling stories of those who benefit from them.



K-12 Education -- Colorado Alliance member, the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative (CCC), will take the lead in advocating for equitable ARRA spending on education and coordinating an active multi-year effort that includes national and local funders and state-based education advocates. In fact, by targeting educational reform, or more specifically, school finance reform, as a core focus of the Alliance, the Alliance will be able to leverage OSI's funding to secure additional support from the Piton Foundation, a Colorado statewide funder. Piton has agreed to provide technical assistance, organize a planning retreat for the Alliance to assist it in developing an integrated set of strategies to focus on ARRA education funding, and help with fundraising and sustaining its work over time through its network of donors.

**Rationale for Recommendation:**

The Seize the Day Initiative recommends a grant to the Colorado Alliance of \$500,000 over two years to support its ability to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery. The Colorado Alliance represents a formidable collection of organizations. Each of the Alliance partners brings a critical set of constituencies, relationships, expertise, and strategies to the project. Also as a testament to the investment in this collective effort, each partner agreed to make an in-kind contribution to the project budget. The proposal reflects a high level of coordination among the partner organizations and makes it clear that there are other state groups who will not be receiving funding under the grant that are also prepared to provide long-term support to this project.

Colorado is a ballot initiative state and as such its citizens play a significant role in policy making in comparison to non-ballot initiative states where it is legislators who make policy decisions. The Colorado Alliance's approach to stimulus spending reflects this important distinction and makes a strong case for the comprehensive research, organizing, and communication campaign it proposes to launch. In essence, because Colorado voters are often empowered to make state policy decisions under a ballot initiative process and any attempts to raise taxes, ease constraints on government or enact innovative changes to government programs is not likely to be accomplished without their approval, Colorado provides a unique testing ground to demonstrate what can be accomplished as a result of more transparency, accountability, and equity in government spending. Given the longer-term interest of the Alliance -- to see a time when confidence in government will enable meaningful tax policy reform -- working to improve ARRA spending and highlight its success represents a compelling approach. The strategy may have lessons that could extend to other ballot initiative states as well.

Lastly, the Colorado Alliance benefits from significant state-based institutional support that will strengthen and sustain its ability to ensure ARRA dollars are wisely spent in the near term and lay the groundwork for long-term fiscal reform. Chief among its supporters are the Piton Foundation, the Denver Foundation, Rose Community Foundation, and others with access to local and national resources and a shared commitment to the success of the Alliance.

**Florida**

<b><u>Name of Organization:</u></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Miami Workers Center</li><li>2. Research Institute on Social &amp; Economic Policy</li><li>3. Florida Immigration Coalition</li><li>4. Florida Legal Services</li><li>5. Power U Center for Social Change</li><li>6. Jobs with Justice/Central and South Florida Chapters</li><li>7. Kirwan Institute</li><li>8. Advancement Project</li></ol>
<b><u>Tax Status:</u></b>	1. – 8. 501 (c) (3) public charity
<b><u>FPOS Grant Description:</u></b>	This grant will support eight organizations working to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery, specifically focusing on state distribution of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
<b><u>Previous OSI Support:</u></b>	No
<b><u>Organization Budget:</u></b>	\$1.2M
<b><u>Project Budget:</u></b>	\$1,073,000 over two years <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. \$283,500 for 2009; \$279,000 for 2010</li><li>2. \$75,000 for 2009; \$115,000 for 2010</li><li>3. \$25,000 for 2009; \$25,000 for 2010</li><li>4. \$31,000 for 2009; \$22,000 for 2010</li><li>5. \$30,000 for 2009; \$37,500 for 2010</li><li>6. \$12,500 for 2009; \$12,500 for 2010</li><li>7. \$25,000 for 2009; \$25,000 for 2010</li><li>8. \$37,500 for 2009; \$37,500 for 2010</li></ol>
<b><u>Major Sources of Support:</u></b>	Kellogg Foundation, Ford Foundation
<b><u>Type of Support:</u></b>	Project Support

**Amount Requested:** \$497,500 over two years  
1. \$100,000 over two years  
2. \$150,000 over two years  
3. \$30,000 over two years  
4. \$37,500 over two years  
5. \$67,500 over two years  
6. \$25,000 over two years  
7. \$50,000 over two years  
8. \$37,500 over two years

**Amount Recommended:** \$452,500 over two years through the Seize the Day Fund (21079)  
1. \$50,000 over two years  
2. \$150,000 over two years  
3. \$30,000 over two years  
4. \$37,500 over two years  
5. \$67,500 over two years  
6. \$25,000 over two years  
7. \$50,000 over two years  
8. \$37,500 over two years

**Term:** Two years beginning December 1, 2009

**Description of Organizations**

The alliance of organizations seeking Seize the Day State RFP funding to work in Florida (the Florida Alliance) consists of eight groups whose contributions to the Alliance are described below.

1. Miami Workers Center (MWC). Founded as a volunteer organization in 1999 by two former union organizers, the Center helps working class people build grassroots organizations and develop their leadership capacity through community organizing campaigns and education programs. Through a core commitment to coalition building, MWC works to advance racial, community, social, and economic justice. Its priority areas include welfare reform, affordable housing, tenants and voter rights, racial justice, gentrification and economic development, and fair trade. MWC will serve as the lead organization for the Florida Alliance. It will be responsible for overall campaign coordination including supervising campaign staff, communications, fundraising, and project administration. (MWC is also being considered for another grant on this docket from the Special Opportunity Fund for its census work.)

2. Research Institute on Social & Economic Policy (RISEP). RISEP is part of the Center for Labor Research and Studies at Florida International University. It was founded in 2004 by Professor Bruce Nissen, a longtime labor educator with a particular interest in

social justice, with the express mission of serving grassroots social justice organizing in Florida. In pursuit of this unique social justice support mission, RISEP does not run its own campaigns. Rather, RISEP serves as a resource center for social and economic justice organizations and coalitions. RISEP is the Florida affiliate of the Economic Policy Institute's (EPI) Economic Analysis and Research Network (EARN) and receives technical assistance from the Economic Policy Institute and EARN. RISEP will provide research and analysis for the Florida Alliance, specifically tracking the racial equity impact of stimulus spending in four Florida metropolitan areas. It will also coordinate research conducted by the Florida Alliance's national research partners.

3. Florida Immigration Coalition (FLIC). FLIC is a statewide immigrant rights network that conducts education, organizing, and advocacy and brings together a broad sector of religious, labor, and grassroots organizations to support and defend immigrant rights at local, state and national levels. FLIC will lead grassroots education campaigns and organizing activities in Tampa and Orlando on behalf of the Florida Alliance.

4. Florida Legal Services (FLS). FLS is a statewide legal assistance and advocacy organization. It will provide the Alliance with the legal and advocacy expertise, training and education needed to implement strategies at the local level.

5. Power U Center for Social Change (Power U). Power U is a Miami-based grassroots organization that promotes economic and environmental justice, health care and juvenile justice reform. This group will be responsible for conducting grassroots education, community organizing as well as hosting a town hall meeting for its predominantly low-income African American constituency. This group will also serve as the link between the Florida Alliance and the National Right to the City Alliance (a OSI grantee) and its national campaign on ARRA recovery dollars.

6. Jobs with Justice/Central and South Florida Chapters (Jobs with Justice FL). Jobs with Justice FL will organize low wage union and non-union workers to advance and defend workers' rights. Its chapters will be responsible for organizing town hall meetings in Orlando and Miami, activating their constituencies in support of the Florida Alliance, and disseminating information regarding the Alliance's local efforts to Jobs with Justice's regional and national networks.

7. Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State (Kirwan). Kirwan is a leading national research center on racial equity. In the spring of 2009, it partnered with MWC and RISEP to track the racial, class, and gender equity impact of federal stimulus and neighborhood stabilization spending in four metropolitan areas in Florida. As part of the Florida Alliance, Kirwan will continue to track and analyze economic recovery spending in Florida, identify areas in the state with the greatest need, and function as a national communications resource on stimulus related advocacy efforts in Florida.

8. Advancement Project (AP). AP is a national civil rights law, policy and communications organization with years of experience working in Florida. As part of this Alliance, AP will provide federal policy analysis and expertise on legal enforcement tools such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and/or Section 3 of the HUD Act of 1968 prohibiting discrimination in program and activities receiving federal funds.

### **Description of Program for which Funding is Sought**

In May of this year, before the release of the first Seize the Day State RFP, MWC, Kirwan, and RISEP, launched a two-year campaign to analyze the impact of economic recovery dollars on marginalized communities in Florida. Based on local experience in Florida as well as review of preliminary national data on the expenditure of 2008 federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds, these groups recognized that this earlier recovery funding was not subject to community participation or expert oversight and was not making community infrastructure investments where they were most urgently needed. The groups launched an effort with two primary goals: 1) to expose how public investments can create or stifle opportunity for low-income families, in particular African American and Latino families; and 2) to craft place-based, community-led strategies to advocate for equity and transparency in the use of economic recovery funds.

MWC, Kirwan and RISEP have already released a white paper and a research report. The white paper, *Building Opportunity*, outlines the economic situation of Black and Latino communities in Florida and offers some initial recommendations for increasing equity and democracy in economic stimulus spending in Florida. The research report *How Fair is Florida?* was just released in October at a town hall in the predominantly African American low-income community, Miami Gardens, garnering significant community and media attention. The report used mapping to describe the economic situation in urban Black and Latino communities in Florida and analyzed ARRA federal contract data to gauge initial equity impacts. Both reports continue to receive good local and national news coverage. This early work received partial support from both the Kellogg Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

MWC and its initial partners now propose to deepen and expand the scope of their work by targeting specific policy areas where opportunity could be expanded for low-income communities of color and women, and by including additional partners in order to reach a broader range of constituencies. This proposed new Florida Alliance is highly representative of key sectors of the state's population. Comprised of state and local grassroots organizations representing low-income people of color, immigrants, and youth, state level research and policy groups, it is a formidable coalition and the only effort of its kind in the state. The Florida Alliance will also draw on the expertise of national partners, including the Advancement Project, Right to the City Alliance, and the STAR Coalition, all of which are OSI grantees.

As a first step, the Alliance has identified two main research needs going forward that will further inform its organizing work: a stimulus tracking study consisting of quantitative and qualitative components, and policy research to identify concrete opportunities for bringing the benefits of stimulus spending to local communities. Initial research suggests weatherization and minority contractor participation are key policy areas with the potential to fulfill the intention of ARRA to bring the benefits of federal dollars to minority communities.

1. Minority Contractors -- One of the main barriers to greater minority contractor participation is the state's Department of Transportation, which is contracting out the vast majority of ARRA funded construction projects in Florida, and has obligated stimulus

dollars for projects that were already approved as part of its master plan. Thus, *new* opportunities for minority, small and emerging contractors to participate are very limited. In order to increase opportunities for minority contractors, technical assistance is necessary to assist with bidding, bonding, cash flow, and other issues. Projects need to be broken down into sizes small enough for the level of bonding that a small or emerging contractor is able to secure, and payment systems must be quick enough to meet the payroll needs of small contractors who cannot front large sums. Florida's Department of Transportation has set a goal of 8% minority contractor participation for federally funded projects, of which ARRA projects are a part, but so far there has been no reporting on how well Florida is meeting that goal. Part of the project's new research will be to gather this data and report on Florida's progress in including minority contractors, in order to make recommendations for Florida to meet and exceed its goal.

2. Weatherization Program -- Florida has yet to implement a program to weatherize homes that may provide real job opportunities for minority contractors and low-income workers. Florida has received an additional \$176 million in ARRA funding for weatherization. Currently these weatherization funds are not being used to expand opportunities for small and emerging contractors or green job training opportunities for local communities, as they could be. The Florida Alliance will work with the state Department of Community Affairs and the various local agencies to use the weatherization program as a catalyst for developing sectoral employment strategies for green jobs that target low-income Black and Latino residents. Florida has very little experience with these kinds of economic development partnerships, particularly those that include significant representation by communities and residents. OSI funding would enable the Alliance to introduce best practices from other states in an effort to ensure accountability and benefits for communities of color.

Support for the Florida Alliance will also ensure the release of future reports that will focus on other areas of ARRA spending based on community input and strategic opportunities. Such areas might include housing, health, and education. These reports will be developed by integrating the interests of grassroots partners in the four significant metropolitan areas where Alliance partners are well represented (Miami, Orlando, Tampa, and Jacksonville), hosting town hall meetings to engage the public and press further, and continuing to identify strategic opportunities to advocate for more equitable investment in communities of color.

### **Rationale for Recommendation:**

The Seize the Day Initiative recommends a grant to the Florida Alliance of \$455,000 over two years to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery. With an economy deeply dependent on the continuous growth of the housing market and on an unstable low-wage service sector, Florida has been one of the states hardest hit by the recession. The partner organizations in this Florida Alliance who represent the most politically and economically marginalized Floridians are acutely aware of the disproportionate impact this economic downturn has had on their constituencies. In effect, their constituencies represent the metaphorical "canary in the coal mine,"

portending the depth of the economic crisis and exposing where the economy is most unsound.

Key Florida Alliance partners have already begun to build a compelling case for direct stimulus resources to the most opportunity-deprived areas of the state -- not only as a means to improve the lives of those most vulnerable, but also for the long term economic viability of the entire state. Its initial research and collective work has already been recognized by national peers and allies, such as OSI grantee the STAR Coalition, which has benefited directly from MWC's on the ground advocacy for better ARRA reporting data.

Support for this Florida Alliance will enable U.S. Programs to advance its many interests, including building research sophistication and capacity among base building groups, while leveraging the early investment of funders like Kellogg and Ford. Specifically, OSI funds will be used to enhance the Florida Alliance's own research capacity and to accelerate and strengthen its collective work through the addition of new organizing partners. As a part of the proposal review process we asked MWC to submit a revised project budget and in so doing some support for staff was shaved from the Alliance's initial request. We also shared with MWC the idea of funding the Collin's Center for Public Policy because of the Center's unique access to state ARRA data (described next) as a supplemental grant to support the Florida Alliance. MWC expressed a willingness to work directly with Collins.

**Florida**

**Name of Organization:** Collins Center for Public Policy

**Tax Status:** 501 (c) (3)

**FPOS Grant Description:** This grant will support one Florida based organization working to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery, specifically focusing on state distribution of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

**Previous OSI Support:** No

**Organization Budget:** \$26M

**Project Budget:** \$440,000 over two years

**Major Sources of Support:** Florida Bar Association, South Florida Water Management District. The Kellogg Foundation is a prospect.

**Type of Support:** Project Support

**Amount Requested:** \$440,000 over two years

**Amount Recommended:** \$150,000 over two years through the Seize the Day Fund (21079)

**Term:** Two years beginning December 1, 2009

**Description of Organizations**

Established in 1988 in the name of former Florida Governor LeRoy Collins' legacy of uncompromising integrity in government and business, the Collins Center for Public



Policy (the Collins Center or Collins) seeks to find impartial solutions to controversial issues that impact the citizens of Florida and the nation. The Collins Center is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank with offices in Miami, Tallahassee and Venice. With a diverse staff of more than 20 professionals, the Center sees quality public policy analysis as only one aspect of sound problem solving. Another critical piece involves ensuring good information and analysis is targeted to reach those citizens who need it most. Its past accomplishments underscore this commitment to translating public policy research and analysis into concrete strategies that benefit vulnerable communities. For instance, to increase the standard of living for all Floridians, the Collins Center's Partners for Progress helped resolve an early 1990's African American boycott of the South Florida tourist industry, and its microenterprise project helped low-income families launch small businesses throughout the state. The Collins Center sees itself as unique in this role referring to itself as a "think tank with muddy boots."

Through this grant, the Collins Center proposes a new partnership with the Florida Office of Economic Recovery (OER). (OER will not receive OSI funding as a part of this grant.) Created this year by an executive order from the governor, OER is responsible for overseeing and tracking the distribution of Florida's federal stimulus dollars and ensuring taxpayers have access to the information needed to hold government accountable for its use of the funds. This new office is comprised of a small staff of information technology professionals, project managers, financial analysts and communications personnel. OER sees a partnership with the Collins Center as a means to expand its own capacity to translate and further disseminate stimulus-related data.

### **Description of Program for which Funding is Sought**

State and local governments that receive American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding are legally required to ensure an open and transparent process in disclosing how ARRA funds are used. To meet this requirement, many state and local government recipients are creating web sites similar to the federal site [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov) to inform the public regarding the flow of ARRA money. In Florida, Governor Charles Crist has created a web site to inform citizens about ARRA spending and its impact. He also designated the newly created Florida Office of Economic Recovery to manage this initiative.

The gist of the Collins Center's proposal is that mere disclosure of ARRA spending data is not enough. There must be systems in place to accommodate independent community participation, commentary, and input that includes economic and policy analyses. To address this need, Collins proposes to collaborate with the state's Office of Economic Recovery to play both a monitoring and facilitating role related to the state's stimulus spending. It seeks to build and host an online community, or social network, that uses the most current interactive technologies. Moving from a definition of transparency as the passive disclosure of government spending toward a new definition of transparency as a dynamic means to public participation in government spending, this website will facilitate public engagement for citizens and stakeholders to communicate with their government and with each other regarding ARRA implementation in Florida. The Office

of Economic Recovery has agreed to provide Collins with access to its data on state spending. Collins will conduct the economic and policy analysis of this data and help develop alternative policy options. It will also host virtual public discussions on spending decisions to ensure broad multi-stakeholder input.

Specifically, Collins will:

1. Collect and disseminate recovery-related spending data.
  - Establish a recognized monitoring and reporting system that will focus on ARRA dollars in the state of Florida and that is available to public policy makers, community leaders, local and national foundations, health and social service providers, and the community-at-large.
2. Promote equitable spending.
  - Provide up-to-date information that may be used to advocate for more equitable distribution of recovery funds with particular sensitivity to the needs of vulnerable populations.
3. Promote a strong civil society to monitor government decisions and spending.
  - Provide data and other tools to citizens, stakeholders, media and organizations to be active participants in public policy-making, acting as overseers, and reporters to help track and measure impact of those funds.
4. Provide information regarding the role of decision-makers in the success or failure of economic recovery and associated policies.
  - Offer a straightforward and enhanced transparent public engagement model that can be replicated by other governments at all levels.

This grant will enable Collins to dedicate a part-time economist and additional administrative support to the project. If successful, at the end of the grant period, it will have created a neutral, independent mechanism that provides consistent reporting and the space for two-way public discussion on public spending decisions, thus developing the capacity to continue monitoring government spending beyond ARRA.

### **Rationale for Recommendation:**

The Seize the Day Initiative recommends a grant to the Collins Center of \$150,000 over two years to support its ability to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery.

The unique collaboration between Collins and the Florida Office of Economic Recovery offers a level of access to government data that none of the other Seize the Day State RFP applicants have been able to attain. The Office of Economic Recovery is empowered by the Governor and as such has the necessary leverage to gather key data from the full range of executive branch agencies. This raw information will be shared with Collins' team of economists and policy analysts who will translate the data into a form that can be

readily accessed and used by citizens, nongovernmental organizations, media, and academics.

Collins and OER have never worked together before, though it is evident that both have much to gain from a successful collaboration: each can help the other to fulfill its mission. Collins does have previous experience collaborating with other state government entities. Previous state partners include the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Board of Elections, and the Department of Corrections – three agencies relevant to other U.S. Programs interests.

Collins aspires to be the kind of think tank relevant and of service to constituencies most directly impacted by changes in public policy. Yet, by its own admission, Collins has not developed the credibility it needs to build meaningful partnerships with members of Florida's grassroots organizing community. Without prescribing how these groups might work together, USP staff has expressed an interest in Collins and the members of the Florida Alliance (recommended for funding in this docket) coordinating their efforts to promote equity and transparency in economic recovery spending in Florida. We believe that Collins, with its expertise in transparency and its unprecedented access to state ARRA data, has the potential to enhance the Florida Alliance's advocacy agenda. Collins' staff have expressed a willingness to work with the Florida Alliance. And the Florida Alliance has the advocacy expertise and broad base to apply Collins' analysis and develop policy options that are responsive to the needs of Florida's most vulnerable populations.

For all the reasons stated above, staff recommends a two-year grant of \$150,000 to the Collins Center.

**California**

- Organization:**
1. California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc
  2. California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
  3. PolicyLink (will not receive additional OSI funding from this grant)
- Tax Status:**
1. – 3. 501 (c) (3)
- FPOS Grant Description:**
- This grant will include three California -based organizations working to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery, specifically focusing on state distribution of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
- Previous OSI Support:**
- No
- Organization Budget:**
1. \$13,2561,000
- Project Budget:**
- \$500,000 over two years
1. \$191,000 for 2009; \$99,000 for 2010
  2. \$50,000 for 2009; \$35,000 for 2010
  3. \$65,000 for 2009; \$60,000 for 2010
- Major Sources of Support:**
- None
- Type of Support:**
- Project Support
- Amount Requested:**
- \$499,000 over two years
1. \$290,000 over two years
  2. \$85,000 over two years
  3. \$125,000 over two years

**Amount Recommended:** \$329,000 over two years through the Seize the Day Fund (21079)  
1. \$229,000 over two years  
2. \$100,000 over two years  
3. \$00,000 over two years

**Term:** Two years beginning December 1, 2009

**Description of Organizations**

The following three organizations have come together to seek Seize the Day State RFP funding to work in California and their contributions to this collective effect are described below.

1. California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc (CRLA) is a state based and state wide organization that focuses advocacy on rural and unincorporated urban communities throughout California. Its mission is to leverage public interest law for the well being of low-income rural/immigrant individuals and communities. CRLA accomplishes its mission through a combination of strategies that includes increasing access to high-quality no-cost legal services for low-income communities and promoting the participation of low-income communities in public policy.

CRLA will serve as the lead organization for this California Alliance and as such will be responsible for 1) developing the capacity of community leaders to participate in decision-making processes related to ARRA funding, 2) leveraging its network of local offices to ensure that low-income communities are notified of opportunities for public engagement, 3) tracking the allocation of ARRA infrastructure funds at the local, regional and state levels, 4) exploring the relationship between the allocation of ARRA infrastructure funds to community demographics, poverty and unemployment levels, and geography – i.e. rural v. urban, and 5) if necessary, pursuing legal advocacy to ensure equitable distribution of ARRA funds based on race and ethnicity.

2. California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation (CRLAF) is CRLA's sister organization with more than twenty years of experience linking policy advocacy and policy change to the needs of farmworkers and other low income rural Californians. CRLAF, based in Sacramento and Fresno, focuses its advocacy and community education on improving conditions of employment for farmworkers and improving housing opportunities for low income Californians. CRLAF has extensive experience advocating for access to clean and affordable drinking water and equitable infrastructure investments in low-income communities of color in rural California. CRLAF has experience in legislative, administrative, and legal advocacy. As part of the Alliance, CRLA Foundation will lead the Alliance's state advocacy efforts on two primary ARRA spending areas: 1) Water and 2) Transportation Funding. CRLA Foundation will also be responsible for linking its rural-based advocacy with the core urban-centered work of PolicyLink in CA to create a platform for dialogue between rural and urban communities.

3. PolicyLink is a national policy and research organization with strong history and presence in California. PolicyLink has developed a strong track record on ARRA implementation both at the state and local level. With existing support from OSI, PolicyLink is engaged in recovery work at the national level and in ten states across the country. In California, PolicyLink has been a leader on workforce, weatherization and energy programs funded through ARRA. This Alliance will leverage the experience and knowledge PolicyLink has developed, specifically its capacity to use a broad range of technologies, including GIS mapping to illustrate and analyze the results and repercussions of local, regional, and state level decisions regarding ARRA allocations. This mapping is necessary to illustrate the extent to which ARRA funds are allocated fairly and equitably to disadvantaged rural and unincorporated urban communities.

PolicyLink will receive no additional OSI support for its contribution to this Alliance and has agreed to tap its existing resources to cover a more modest role. This role includes serving as a consultant to CRLA Inc. and the CRLAF in the drafting and review of a paper that will examine ARRA's impact in two select counties of Fresno and Stanislaus, instead of writing the paper itself as originally proposed.

#### **Description of Program for which Funding is Sought**

Over the next two years, California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA), the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation (CRLAF), and PolicyLink will work to ensure that federal recovery dollars granted to California support long-term change in the State's most distressed, low-income and immigrant communities of color in the San Joaquin Valley region. (If this grant is approved, it will be the second California Alliance funded through our state alliance RFP project.)

CRLA, CRLAF and PolicyLink have worked well together for years. In 2007, the three organizations created a collaborative effort to address the unique challenges of California's low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities. The first year of this collaboration focused on conducting research that allowed the partners to understand the challenges disadvantaged rural and unincorporated communities face and to develop strategies to target resources to meet these challenges. This process involved holding several large regional convenings of diverse stakeholders, including local government representatives, non-profit leaders, community residents, foundations, legal advocates, and professional researchers. This learning led to a formal collaborative with community leaders and stakeholders dedicated to raising awareness of the persistent inequality within rural and unincorporated urban communities.

Building on the learning and momentum generated by this early work, these three partner organizations propose to form a new California Alliance that will work to ensure that federal recovery dollars granted to California support long term change in the state's most distressed, rural immigrant communities of color in the San Joaquin Valley region. Given the size of California, success will require a targeted approach. For strategic reasons, the Alliance has chosen to focus on communities within the San Joaquin Valley:

The San Joaquin Valley is one of the fastest growing areas of California and is one of the most agriculturally rich regions in our nation. Despite this, it includes some of the nation's poorest communities with a huge immigrant and migrant agricultural worker population.

Through a combination of advocacy, research, community organizing and capacity building, technical support provision, and communications, this California Alliance will build on the its early collaborative work to ensure that ARRA funding is distributed to those communities in the region with the greatest need. It will work toward achieving these five specific outcomes:

1. *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)* infrastructure dollars will be invested in low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities of color;
2. ARRA decision making processes at the local, regional and state level are more open and inclusive;
3. Residents of low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities of color understand and engage in funding allocation decision making processes;
4. Public awareness about the needs and historic disinvestment in low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities of color is increased; and
5. Public funding programs are amended to more effectively reach these communities in future funding cycles.

*ARRA infrastructure dollars will be invested in low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities of color.* In order to ensure the ARRA funding brings immediate and long-term change to California's most distressed communities, the Alliance will focus its efforts on infrastructure funding programs. Historical patterns of neglect and disinvestment across the state mean that millions of Californians do not have access to the most basic features of a safe and healthy community things like safe drinking water, sewerage treatment service, sidewalks, public transportation, and paved roads. Alliance partners will leverage their network of allies and partners to target existing funding opportunities in transportation, water infrastructure and energy programs.

*ARRA decision making processes at the local, regional and state level become more open and inclusive.* In addition to conducting advocacy focused on impacting how funds are allocated, the Alliance will work to ensure that the decision-making processes at the local, regional and state level are more open and inclusive.

*Residents are engaged in decision making processes.*

To ensure that residents of low-income rural communities are prepared to engage in the decision-making process, the Alliance will develop the capacity of community residents to participate. This work will involve identifying all agencies at the local, regional and state level that are responsible for managing and allocating ARRA funds and ensuring these local agencies abide by the legal guidelines to encourage public participation. It will also require developing a curriculum and conducting training that will build understanding among leaders in low income rural and unincorporated urban communities

of policies and practices related to the distribution of ARRA funds and enhance the capacity of community leaders to sit at local decision making tables.

*Awareness of the needs of and historic disinvestment in low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities* The Alliance will analyze both historic federal infrastructure allocation to low income rural and unincorporated urban communities of color and specifically ARRA allocation to the same communities. The Alliance will continue to track the allocation of federal infrastructure funds and also analyze the extent to which ARRA and other federal infrastructure funds have gone to the targeted communities of need.

*Public funding programs are amended to more effectively reach these communities in future funding cycles.* By tracking the distribution of ARRA funds with regard to geography, the Alliance will begin to bring attention to the way federal infrastructure funds are currently distributed while elevating alternative approaches. For instance, recommending that a portion of the State Revolving Funds that support water infrastructure programs is distributed as loans instead of grant awards while counter intuitive actually can ensure that high need communities have the necessary time to prepare their projects and applications for future rounds of stimulus funding.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The Seize the Day Initiative recommends a grant to the California Alliance of \$329,000 over two years to support its ability to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery.

Despite the explicit intent of ARRA to bring federal resources to rural American, rural and unincorporated urban areas in need are not benefiting from the stimulus dollars awarded to the states. This is because for the most part smaller rural communities can't compete with urban communities for the larger "shovel-ready" highways, roads, and bridges projects that government seeks to distribute funding quickly. Urban areas also almost always beat out rural regions on the sheer numbers of people in poverty or unemployed, making rural needs easy to overlook. Social justice advocates, along with some forward-thinking philanthropic leaders, have been for years raising concerns about the lack of resources targeted at low-income rural communities and unincorporated urban communities of color and the consequences, both social and political.

Given the size and complexity of the state of California, the Alliance has made a strong case for the wisdom of targeting the Joaquin Valley Region. Under a state funding structure that is largely and increasingly decentralized, it makes sense to build advocacy capacity in key local regions where the needs for federal stimulus dollars are greatest. There are many funding decisions regarding transportation and infrastructure still to be made at the regional and local level, and crafting a discrete targeted approach increases the Alliances' ability to bring about substantive outcomes.



When recommending initial state alliance funding last month, USP staff recognized the need to reserve some of our overall grantmaking resources for state alliances so that we might consider additional compelling proposals received from our first round, particularly for some of the larger, more complex states, such as California. As with our recommendation for additional funding for New York State efforts (described next), we recommend funding for this additional proposal from California. This new California Alliance, with its focus on rural and unincorporated urban communities, will complement the work of the recently funded California Alliance, led by the PowerPac Foundation, which is primarily urban in its focus. While we have not prescribed how these two state-based Alliance might see fit to work together, we believe both Alliances have much to learn from one another. The PowerPac Alliance has an extensive statewide network and access to state level policymakers. This new California Alliance has expressed interest in formalizing a relationship with the PowerPac Alliances and its constituencies. Likewise, the PowerPac Alliance will benefit from the knowledge and experience of this new California Alliance to explore more fully the growing dynamics and issues between urban and rural communities.

Lastly, the commitment of the three partner organizations to this project is genuine and significant. When we explained that the foundation would not make an additional grant to one of the three partner organizations, PolicyLink, because of our previous support for this organization to do stimulus work at the national level, all parties were required to reevaluate their respective roles and reconsider how best to move the project forward. PolicyLink agreed to augment its contribution to this project at a reduced level through other funds. The other two partners agreed to take on responsibility for some of the pieces of the project previously assigned to PolicyLink, such as drafting the final report. More importantly everyone agreed that, given their reduced collective capacity, the entire project should be scaled back and the budget further reduced to ensure both the integrity of the project and true alignment between capacity and targeted outcomes. This collaborative effort, at the outset, encourages staff about the potential for the proposed long-term partnership.

**New York**

**Name of Organization:** 1. The Legal Aid Society  
2. Empire Justice Center

**Tax Status:** 2 - 501 (c) (3)

**FPOS Grant Description:** This grant will support two New York State-based organizations working to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery, specifically focusing on state distribution of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

**Previous OSI Support:** Yes

**Organization Budget:** \$165.7M

**Project Budget:** \$200,000 over two years

**Major Sources of Support:** None

**Type of Support:** Project Support

**Amount Requested:** \$200,000 over two years  
1. \$50,000 for 2009, \$50,000 for 2010  
2. \$50,000 for 2009, \$50,000 for 2010

**Amount Recommended:** \$100,000 over one year through the Seize the Day Fund (21079)  
1. \$50,000 for 2009  
2. \$50,000 for 2009

**Term:**

One year beginning December 1, 2009

**Description of Organizations**

The Legal Aid Society is the nation's oldest and largest provider of legal services for low-income individuals and families. With a staff of almost 1500, Legal Aid provides civil, criminal, and juvenile rights legal assistance to low-income families and individuals in every community across the five boroughs of New York City. The Legal Aid Society also serves as the City's primary public defender for individuals accused of criminal conduct, as well as for individuals accused of parole violations. In addition to its casework, Legal Aid is frequently asked by government officials to provide information and comment regarding existing and proposed public policies affecting its clients. Housing, homelessness, income and economic security issues, health, employment, immigration law are just some of the policy advocacy issues Legal Aid engages both legislatively and administratively. Legal Aid's staff also works frequently in coalition with a number of community groups and other advocacy organizations on a wide array of issues. Two senior attorneys, Kathleen Kelleher and Kenneth Stephens, will coordinate the work of Legal Aid on this project. Legal Aid will serve as the lead organization for this project.

The Empire Justice Center is a statewide multi-issue public interest law firm with offices in Albany, Rochester, White Plains, and Central Islip that focus on changing the systems that affect poor people's lives. With its expertise in poverty law, Empire Justice undertakes research and training, acts as an informational clearinghouse, and provides litigation backup to local legal service programs and community based organizations. As an advocacy organization, Empire Justice also engages in legislative and administrative advocacy on a range of policy issues, including public assistance, child care, food stamps, immigration, housing, predatory lending, to name a few. Empire Justice also provides legal assistance to those in need and undertakes impact litigation to protect and defend the rights of disenfranchised New Yorkers. Empire Justice staff are engaged in a number of coalitions, among them Economic Security (E2), Community Reinvestment Coalition, and the Legal Services Funding Alliance. Senior Attorney, Don Friedman, along with senior attorney, Susan Antos, will coordinate the work of Empire Justice staff on this project.

**Description of Program for which Funding is Sought**

These two organizations propose to serve as a legal resource for the NYS Alliance, recently funded by the foundation. Specifically, these two organizations will come together to prepare a "Blueprint" to support the New York State Alliance and ensure that New York State draws down the maximum amount of federal stimulus dollars available for the alleviation of poverty. The grant would cover staff attorneys' time at both organizations and some modest administrative expenses.

Legal Aid and Empire Justice have a long history of working together successfully on behalf of those impacted by poverty and discrimination. One recent successful joint effort between the two organizations involved OSI's Fund for Poverty Alleviation. Not long ago, Legal Aid attorneys, Kenneth Stephens and Kathleen Kelleher, and the Empire Justice Center's senior attorney, Susan Antos, proposed to Mimi Corcoran, director of OSI's Fund for Poverty Alleviation, to use stimulus funds to finance a Back-to-School allowance for children receiving Food Stamps and other public assistance benefits. This proposal was later adopted and a donation of \$35M dollars from George Soros enabled the state to leverage \$140M in federal stimulus dollars to finance the \$175M initiative. Through this effort, this past August, over 800,000 children received Back to School payments of \$200.00 each.

With this expertise in leveraging federal and state dollars for NYS's most disadvantaged, Legal Aid and Empire Justice now propose to apply their knowledge to work with the NYS Alliance to ensure that New York State draws down the maximum amount of federal stimulus dollars available for poverty alleviation. This analysis, or Blueprint, will focus on several key substantive issues to garner maximum federal stimulus dollars, including job, education and training opportunities, public benefits, unemployment insurance benefits, and health care. The Blueprint will promote a stronger safety net and a greater distribution of stimulus dollars for those who need it most -- low-income people, people of color, women, immigrants, youth, and the formerly incarcerated.

In preparing this Blueprint, Legal Aid and Empire Justice attorneys will meet with the leadership of the new NYS Alliance to determine jointly the most strategic components of federal stimulus funds to target for further research. Once there is agreement between the NYS Alliance and the attorneys, the Legal Aid/Empire Justice legal team will analyze federal law, rules, and regulations as they relate to state law and determine how New York can maximize the draw down of these federal funds.

With input from the NYS Alliance, the legal team will draft the Blueprint, its findings and recommendations, with an eye toward the state legislative hearings and the budget process in early 2010. NYS Alliance members and their constituencies will be able to use these recommendations when formulating testimony for the legislature and/or any advocacy messages to the wider public. If properly timed there may also be an opportunity to inform the state budget process through a coordinated strategy. The Legal Aid/Empire Justice team will prepare a second report near the end of 2010 detailing the extent to which New York took advantage of the opportunities laid out in the Blueprint, which will enable Alliance partner organizations to make appropriate recommendations for 2011.

### **Rationale for Recommendation:**

The Seize the Day Initiative recommends a grant to the Legal Aid Society of \$100,000 over one year to fund The Legal Aid Society for a partnership with Empire Justice to support the work of the NYS Alliance, previously funded by OSI last month, to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery.

In recommending initial state alliance funding, USP staff recognized the need to reserve some of our overall grantmaking resources for state alliances so that we might consider additional meritorious proposals received from our first round, particularly for some of the larger, more complex states, such as New York State. We see this one-year grant as a timely and discrete supplemental grant with the potential to greatly enhance the work of the newly funded NYS Alliance.

When we introduced this proposal to the leadership of the newly funded NYS Alliance and the response was overwhelming positive. All agreed that Legal Aid and Empire Justice' significant legal knowledge and experience leveraging federal dollars for New York State would be a tremendous resource to the larger advocacy effort. Organizers, even those with formal legal training, agree there isn't always the time or expertise to conduct the kind of comprehensive legal analysis such as the one Legal Aid and Empire Justice are proposing. They viewed the Blueprint as an important tool for them to use to strengthen their advocacy.

Legal Aid attorney Katherine Kelleher was equally enthusiastic about this potential partnership after reviewing the Alliance's original OSI proposal and speaking with key members of the Alliance including representatives from Make the Road, Community Voices Heard, and Common Cause New York. Should this grant be approved, all parties plan to meet together to determine jointly the full scope of legal work to be done and the specific areas of stimulus funding to target for legal research. Also, the groups determined that much of the monitoring function Legal Aid and Empire Justice had originally proposed to play in the second year of a grant (which we decided not to fund) was no longer necessary as Alliance members would naturally cover that role.

A supplemental grant to New York State is warranted given the state's complex rules and regulations and dysfunctional state legislature. The legal analysis provided by Legal Aid and Empire Justice will complement the research, advocacy and organizing expertise of the NYS Alliance improving the likelihood that low-income New Yorkers and other groups of interest to OSI will benefit from federal stimulus dollars.

Memorandum

To: Aryeh Neier

From: Ann Beeson, Helena Huang (OSI Consultant), and the Seize the Day Initiative Grantmaking Committee

Date: November 16, 2009

Re: Seize the Day Initiative Special Docket of Recommendations for Funding State Coalitions to Advance Transparency and Equity

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Enclosed please find five grant recommendations from the Seize the Day Initiative. You will be meeting with the Initiative's grantmaking committee, Ann Beeson, Laleh Ispahani, Raquiba LaBrie, Leonard Noisette, Bill Vandenberg, and Helena Huang, on November 23<sup>rd</sup> at 3:00 pm to discuss these recommendations.

Recent American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) developments suggest there will be an increasingly greater role for advocacy at the state level to ensure that citizens have a voice in the allocation of recovery dollars, and that those funds reach communities most in need. Since our last grants committee meeting with you on October 16<sup>th</sup>, the federal government released for the first time information from recipients receiving federal stimulus dollars intended to provide a full accounting of how recovery dollars have been spent to date. As predicted by national advocates and government watchdog groups (many of them OSI grantees) such as the STAR Coalition, PolicyLink, and OMB Watch, both the data reporting process and the information it produced was inconsistent and sufficiently lacking in detail. Even the federal government was quick to acknowledge this first report was a "work in progress," with more adjustments to come.

In fact, this initial setback may have created some new opportunities to improve reporting requirements. With national advocates continuing to push for better reporting standards such as more demographic information of funding recipients while at the same time continuing to praise the integrity and promise of ARRA the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board, the federal agency that oversees ARRA, has begun to consider making some important changes. Some of these changes, for instance, would require the name of subcontractors in addition to primary contractors; would require states to provide demographic information on job recipients, specifically, racial breakdown and zip code, represent precisely the kind of information necessary for advocates to fully track stimulus spending. In another hopeful sign for advocates, Recovery Board Chairman Earl E. Devaney has indicated that in the future, ARRA recipients who fail to submit reports by the mandated deadline will risk public disclosure on the federal government's website.

Ensuring faithful, timely, and accurate reporting, particularly with small agencies at the local levels, will not be easy. State governments and local agencies continue to exercise enormous influence on how stimulus dollars are spent and accounted for. In most instances, local advocacy will be required to apply the precise combination of support,

resources, and pressure to get the job done. This is compounded by the possibility that many of these proposed new reporting requirements could go into effect as early as January 1, 2010. That would create an even greater need for coordinated stimulus advocacy at the state and local levels as a growing number of these agencies would be mandated to fulfill the new reporting requirements before the end of the second quarter in April.

This is precisely the role our State Alliances are designed to serve. In our first round of grantmaking in response to our special Request for Proposals, we recommended funding for state-based alliances working to fulfill the promise of ARRA in six targeted states, including California, New York, Mississippi, Texas, Wisconsin, and Maryland, under a separate process. In this docket you will find five additional state-based alliances and/or projects recommended for funding. Our targeted states included Colorado, Louisiana, and Florida. Again, we used the same process to solicit proposals as we had with our first round: we released the RFP and hosted informational calls in each state for interested applicants, their national allies, and state-based funders. In several instances, again, we facilitated introductions between organizations working in the same state and encouraged groups to partner with those with complementary skills. We received a total of 13 proposals (one from Colorado, five from Louisiana, and seven from Florida).

From Colorado, we received one meritorious proposal comprised of five complementary research and grassroots organizing groups that are connected to an extensive network of state-based organizations. After a thorough review of the budget, we have concluded that the amount recommended does in fact reflect the needs of the Colorado Alliance to do the work proposed and the funds are allocated reasonably among the partner organizations. This is the only proposal we have recommended for funding at the full request of \$500,000 over two years.

In the case of Louisiana, we did not find a single proposal able to demonstrate sufficiently an ability to bridge some of the historical divides that often keep good government organizations and base-building groups from working together, one of our key criteria. After much consideration on the part of USP staff, we decided it would be best not to recommend funding Louisiana through this process, but rather to look for other opportunities to fund much needed capacity in this state.

We received three strong proposals from Florida and recommend two for funding on this docket. The first is a grant to the Miami Workers Center (also recommended for a grant by the SOF for its census work) and its seven partner organizations as our designated "Florida Alliance." This Florida Alliance offers unparalleled credibility and access to key communities of color across the state and an impressive early track record on stimulus-related advocacy. The second is a grant to the Collins Center for Public Policy, an independent think tank, with an expressed interest in supporting community-based efforts. Collins proposes a new partnership with the Florida Office of Economic Recovery, a new state agency appointed to oversee recovery spending in the state, and offers a level of access to government data that none of the other RFP applicants have been able to attain. We see support for Collins as a supplemental grant designed to

strengthen the work of the proposed Florida Alliance as well as to support transparency in government for the state more generally.

Also included in this docket are two strong proposals from our first round of grantmaking proposals. We reserved some funds in order to be able to consider a second grant to some of the larger, more complex states, such as California and New York State. For California, we are recommending funding a second Alliance that will focus on the timely and often neglected interests of low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities in discrete communities within the San Joaquin Valley. For New York State, we propose funding a small team of lawyers from Legal Aid and the Empire Justice Center to provide targeted legal analysis for our recently funded New York State Alliance as a one-year, supplemental grant.

The lead organization is also the fiscal sponsor for each state alliance, and will regrant funds to its partner organizations. The groups are listed below with more detailed descriptions to follow:

- Colorado:** Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute (lead); 9-5 Colorado, FRESC, Progress Now Colorado Education, Colorado Common Cause
  
- Florida:** Miami Workers Center, Research Institute on Social & Economic Policy Florida Immigration Coalition, Florida Legal Services, Power U Center for Social Change, Jobs with Justice/Central and South Florida Chapters, Kirwan Institute, Advancement Project
  
- Florida:** The Collins Center for Public Policy (Supplemental Grant)
  
- New York:** The Legal Aid Society, Empire Justice Center (Supplemental Grant)
  
- California:** California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc, California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, PolicyLink which will not receive additional OSI funding from this grant. (A second Alliance for this state)

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss these recommendations on November 23rd.



**Colorado**

**Name of Organization:**

1. Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute
2. 9-5 Colorado
3. FRESC
4. Progress Now Colorado Education
5. Colorado Common Cause

**Tax Status:**

1. – 5. 501 (c) (3)

**FPOS Grant Description:**

This grant will support five Colorado-based organizations working to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery, specifically focusing on state distribution of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

**Previous OSI Support:**

Yes

**Organization Budget:**

1. \$650,000

**Project Budget:**

\$757,000 over two years

1. \$164,000 for 2009; \$164,000 for 2010
2. \$62,000 for 2009; \$62,000 for 2010
3. \$60,000 for 2009; \$60,000 for 2010
4. \$40,000 for 2009; \$40,000 for 2010
5. \$52,500 for 2009; \$52,500 for 2010

**Major Sources of Support:**

None

**Type of Support:**

Project Support

**Amount Requested:**

\$500,000 over two years

1. \$86,000 over two years
2. \$86,000 over two years
3. \$86,000 over two years

4. \$70,000 over two years
5. \$86,000 over two years

**Amount Recommended:**

\$500,000 over two years through the Seize the Day Fund (21079)

1. \$86,000 over two years
2. \$86,000 over two years
3. \$86,000 over two years
4. \$70,000 over two years
5. \$86,000 over two years

**Term:**

Two years beginning December 1, 2009

**Description of Organizations**

Five complementary research and grassroots organizing groups have come together to form this new Colorado Alliance. They include:

1. Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute (COFPI) is a research policy group, a project of the Colorado Center for Law and Policy, and a member of the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative. Founded in 1996, as both a resource and catalyst, COFPI works for changes in public policy through provision of timely, credible, and accessible fiscal policy analysis, education and advocacy, and coalition building. It will serve as the lead fiscal and research organization for the Colorado Alliance and provide access to ARRA information and analysis. COFPI will also collaborate with its sister research organizations, the Bell Policy Center and Colorado Children’s Campaign, to conduct in-depth analyses of ARRA funding and its impact in key areas such as safety net programs, jobs, and education.

2. 9to5 Colorado is an autonomous statewide chapter (in fact the largest) of 9to5 National Association of Working Women, a national grassroots organization dedicated to defending the rights of low-wage women, women in traditionally female jobs, and those who have experienced employment discrimination. 9-5 Colorado is also a participant in the Economic Recovery and Equal Opportunity Group, an informal network of policy advocacy groups, including some OSI grantees, that is sharing ideas and developing tools to promote equal opportunity and equity in the recovery. Its role within the Alliance is to mobilize its constituency to advocate for greater access to ARRA related jobs and job training programs.

3. FRESC, founded in 2002, is a member of the Partnership for Working Families and as such is dedicated to building strong labor community partnership to support families. Formerly the Front Range Economic Strategy Center, it shortened its name to FRESC in January 2008. As a part of the Colorado Alliance, FRESC will advocate for changes in the weatherization industry to ensure that sustainable jobs go to those who need them most. This strategy is linked to a national campaign founded by the Sierra Club and

Laborers International Union to create and build a new weatherization industry grounded in principles of equity and justice.

4. Progress Now Colorado Education was founded in 2003 to provide a strong, credible voice in advancing progressive solutions to critical community problems. It is an earned and new media organization that leverages emerging web-based technologies, including social networking sites, blogs and YouTube. It is connected to Progress Now with its 12 state affiliates. On behalf of the Alliance, it will be responsible for message development, story writing, and both earned and new media.

5. For 40 years, Colorado Common Cause (CCC) has served as a citizens' lobby group and active leader in the fight for government transparency and accountability as well as increased public participation in the political process. As a partner in the Colorado Alliance, it will synthesize campaign strategy and continue to provide its expertise and experience tracking ARRA spending. In June of 2009, CCC and COFPI joined forces to form the ARRA Accountability Coalition, a group dedicated to working with Colorado's Economic Recovery Accountability Board, the state government agency charged with overseeing ARRA implementation, to advance responsible ARRA spending. CCC will leverage its relationship with the state board and the work of the coalition on behalf of this new Alliance.

#### **Description of Program for which Funding is Sought**

The five key organizations that comprise the Colorado Alliance come from two existing and complementary state-based coalitions. The first coalition, The ARRA Accountability Coalition (AAC), was established this year and includes over twenty-five diverse organizations advocating for more transparent ARRA spending in Colorado. Three key partner groups from this coalition, Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute, Colorado Common Cause, and Progress Now Colorado Education have agreed to join the Alliance. The second existing coalition, the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative (CCOC) is a five-year old partnership of nine grassroots organizing groups based in low and middle income communities and communities of color. This collaborative focuses on equity issues in the state and works to improve programs and policies on a range of issues including immigrant rights, health care, and jobs. Two organizations from this collaborative, 9to5 Colorado and FRESC, have agreed to join the Colorado Alliance and serve as a bridge between the two larger collaborative efforts. This new Alliance offers significant collective credibility and expertise in both transparency and equity funding and, with OSI support, is well equipped to launch and implement a comprehensive campaign to educate and engage citizens and community leaders on the potential of ARRA implementation in the state. This campaign will advocate for transparency at all levels of government and call on decision makers -- from the governor and state legislators to state agency officials -- to support the goal of prioritizing stimulus funding for the benefit of those most in need.

Through a combination of research, organizing and communications strategies, the Colorado Alliance will work to see that federal stimulus dollars in Colorado fulfill the original promise of ARRA and uphold the principles of transparency, accountability, and equity. Alliance partners view ARRA as a unique and timely opportunity to reengage the

public on the role of government and re-imagine a more stable and sustainable state economy. Therefore, the Alliance framed its Seize the Day proposal with an eye toward the longer-term goals of restoring Colorado citizens' confidence in government and methodically building a case for future state tax policy reform.

While the Colorado Alliance has articulated ambitious goals, its collective work is also grounded in a detailed work plan that identifies three specific focus areas:

Safety Net Programs -- In these difficult economic times, a growing number of Colorado families are turning to government programs to meet some of their basic human needs. ARRA provides funding to shore up and expand access to state safety net programs, such as unemployment insurance, Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, etc. Yet, in many instances, state agencies are ill-prepared to leverage these additional funds or may lack the personnel and preexisting mechanisms for distributing stimulus dollars in transparent and equitable ways. Lack of good information or awareness on the part of families most in need is another huge barrier to effective stimulus spending. In response to these challenges as well as opportunities, the Colorado Alliance will analyze specific safety net programs, identify opportunities for the state to leverage additional stimulus dollars, and advocate for policies and practices that can help local government enhance its ability to manage the new federal funds. Through its grassroots partner organizations, it will engage and educate underrepresented communities about potential policy changes due to ARRA funding, how to get involved in the process, and how to tap available resources.

Green Jobs -- In the area of green jobs, the Colorado Alliance will focus on ARRA weatherization funding and jobs for those often excluded from these opportunities. In order to translate this idea into reality, however, targeted local advocacy and organizing will be necessary in Colorado. The Alliance is eager to join forces with other advocates working to advance the idea that government, business, labor, and grassroots communities can partner in creating and implementing programs that increase quality jobs and opportunities in the green industry. Already, Alliance partner organizations have worked with the Governor's Energy Office to draft and adopt a set of principles that underscore the opportunities to create job training programs and ensure that less likely candidates, such as day laborers, immigrants and women, have a chance to compete for these jobs.

Going forward, the Colorado Alliance will identify other green jobs "funding pots." For instance, it plans to work with local agencies to apply for a \$100m Department of Energy ARRA grant that can be used to establish the Denver Pilot Program, a self-financed weatherization model with high quality jobs and access for underrepresented communities. Communicating the impact of these programs will be an integral part of the Alliance's work. Its media partner, Progress Now, will use both traditional and new media technologies to show how ARRA funds are being spent and to tell the compelling stories of those who benefit from them.

K-12 Education -- Colorado Alliance member, the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative (CCC), will take the lead in advocating for equitable ARRA spending on education and coordinating an active multi-year effort that includes national and local funders and state-based education advocates. In fact, by targeting educational reform, or more specifically, school finance reform, as a core focus of the Alliance, the Alliance will be able to leverage OSI's funding to secure additional support from the Piton Foundation, a Colorado statewide funder. Piton has agreed to provide technical assistance, organize a planning retreat for the Alliance to assist it in developing an integrated set of strategies to focus on ARRA education funding, and help with fundraising and sustaining its work over time through its network of donors.

**Rationale for Recommendation:**

The Seize the Day Initiative recommends a grant to the Colorado Alliance of \$500,000 over two years to support its ability to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery. The Colorado Alliance represents a formidable collection of organizations. Each of the Alliance partners brings a critical set of constituencies, relationships, expertise, and strategies to the project. Also as a testament to the investment in this collective effort, each partner agreed to make an in-kind contribution to the project budget. The proposal reflects a high level of coordination among the partner organizations and makes it clear that there are other state groups who will not be receiving funding under the grant that are also prepared to provide long-term support to this project.

Colorado is a ballot initiative state and as such its citizens play a significant role in policy making in comparison to non-ballot initiative states where it is legislators who make policy decisions. The Colorado Alliance's approach to stimulus spending reflects this important distinction and makes a strong case for the comprehensive research, organizing, and communication campaign it proposes to launch. In essence, because Colorado voters are often empowered to make state policy decisions under a ballot initiative process and any attempts to raise taxes, ease constraints on government or enact innovative changes to government programs is not likely to be accomplished without their approval, Colorado provides a unique testing ground to demonstrate what can be accomplished as a result of more transparency, accountability, and equity in government spending. Given the longer-term interest of the Alliance -- to see a time when confidence in government will enable meaningful tax policy reform -- working to improve ARRA spending and highlight its success represents a compelling approach. The strategy may have lessons that could extend to other ballot initiative states as well.

Lastly, the Colorado Alliance benefits from significant state-based institutional support that will strengthen and sustain its ability to ensure ARRA dollars are wisely spent in the near term and lay the groundwork for long-term fiscal reform. Chief among its supporters are the Piton Foundation, the Denver Foundation, Rose Community Foundation, and others with access to local and national resources and a shared commitment to the success of the Alliance.

**Florida**

<b><u>Name of Organization:</u></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Miami Workers Center</li><li>2. Research Institute on Social &amp; Economic Policy</li><li>3. Florida Immigration Coalition</li><li>4. Florida Legal Services</li><li>5. Power U Center for Social Change</li><li>6. Jobs with Justice/Central and South Florida Chapters</li><li>7. Kirwan Institute</li><li>8. Advancement Project</li></ol>
<b><u>Tax Status:</u></b>	1. – 8. 501 (c) (3) public charity
<b><u>FPOS Grant Description:</u></b>	This grant will support eight organizations working to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery, specifically focusing on state distribution of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
<b><u>Previous OSI Support:</u></b>	No
<b><u>Organization Budget:</u></b>	\$1.2M
<b><u>Project Budget:</u></b>	\$1,073,000 over two years <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. \$283,500 for 2009; \$279,000 for 2010</li><li>2. \$75,000 for 2009; \$115,000 for 2010</li><li>3. \$25,000 for 2009; \$25,000 for 2010</li><li>4. \$31,000 for 2009; \$22,000 for 2010</li><li>5. \$30,000 for 2009; \$37,500 for 2010</li><li>6. \$12,500 for 2009; \$12,500 for 2010</li><li>7. \$25,000 for 2009; \$25,000 for 2010</li><li>8. \$37,500 for 2009; \$37,500 for 2010</li></ol>
<b><u>Major Sources of Support:</u></b>	Kellogg Foundation, Ford Foundation
<b><u>Type of Support:</u></b>	Project Support

**Amount Requested:** \$497,500 over two years  
1. \$100,000 over two years  
2. \$150,000 over two years  
3. \$30,000 over two years  
4. \$37,500 over two years  
5. \$67,500 over two years  
6. \$25,000 over two years  
7. \$50,000 over two years  
8. \$37,500 over two years

**Amount Recommended:** \$452,500 over two years through the Seize the Day Fund (21079)  
1. \$50,000 over two years  
2. \$150,000 over two years  
3. \$30,000 over two years  
4. \$37,500 over two years  
5. \$67,500 over two years  
6. \$25,000 over two years  
7. \$50,000 over two years  
8. \$37,500 over two years

**Term:** Two years beginning December 1, 2009

**Description of Organizations**

The alliance of organizations seeking Seize the Day State RFP funding to work in Florida (the Florida Alliance) consists of eight groups whose contributions to the Alliance are described below.

1. Miami Workers Center (MWC). Founded as a volunteer organization in 1999 by two former union organizers, the Center helps working class people build grassroots organizations and develop their leadership capacity through community organizing campaigns and education programs. Through a core commitment to coalition building, MWC works to advance racial, community, social, and economic justice. Its priority areas include welfare reform, affordable housing, tenants and voter rights, racial justice, gentrification and economic development, and fair trade. MWC will serve as the lead organization for the Florida Alliance. It will be responsible for overall campaign coordination including supervising campaign staff, communications, fundraising, and project administration. (MWC is also being considered for another grant on this docket from the Special Opportunity Fund for its census work.)

2. Research Institute on Social & Economic Policy (RISEP). RISEP is part of the Center for Labor Research and Studies at Florida International University. It was founded in 2004 by Professor Bruce Nissen, a longtime labor educator with a particular interest in

social justice, with the express mission of serving grassroots social justice organizing in Florida. In pursuit of this unique social justice support mission, RISEP does not run its own campaigns. Rather, RISEP serves as a resource center for social and economic justice organizations and coalitions. RISEP is the Florida affiliate of the Economic Policy Institute's (EPI) Economic Analysis and Research Network (EARN) and receives technical assistance from the Economic Policy Institute and EARN. RISEP will provide research and analysis for the Florida Alliance, specifically tracking the racial equity impact of stimulus spending in four Florida metropolitan areas. It will also coordinate research conducted by the Florida Alliance's national research partners.

3. Florida Immigration Coalition (FLIC). FLIC is a statewide immigrant rights network that conducts education, organizing, and advocacy and brings together a broad sector of religious, labor, and grassroots organizations to support and defend immigrant rights at local, state and national levels. FLIC will lead grassroots education campaigns and organizing activities in Tampa and Orlando on behalf of the Florida Alliance.

4. Florida Legal Services (FLS). FLS is a statewide legal assistance and advocacy organization. It will provide the Alliance with the legal and advocacy expertise, training and education needed to implement strategies at the local level.

5. Power U Center for Social Change (Power U). Power U is a Miami-based grassroots organization that promotes economic and environmental justice, health care and juvenile justice reform. This group will be responsible for conducting grassroots education, community organizing as well as hosting a town hall meeting for its predominantly low-income African American constituency. This group will also serve as the link between the Florida Alliance and the National Right to the City Alliance (a OSI grantee) and its national campaign on ARRA recovery dollars.

6. Jobs with Justice/Central and South Florida Chapters (Jobs with Justice FL). Jobs with Justice FL will organize low wage union and non-union workers to advance and defend workers' rights. Its chapters will be responsible for organizing town hall meetings in Orlando and Miami, activating their constituencies in support of the Florida Alliance, and disseminating information regarding the Alliance's local efforts to Jobs with Justice's regional and national networks.

7. Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State (Kirwan). Kirwan is a leading national research center on racial equity. In the spring of 2009, it partnered with MWC and RISEP to track the racial, class, and gender equity impact of federal stimulus and neighborhood stabilization spending in four metropolitan areas in Florida. As part of the Florida Alliance, Kirwan will continue to track and analyze economic recovery spending in Florida, identify areas in the state with the greatest need, and function as a national communications resource on stimulus related advocacy efforts in Florida.

8. Advancement Project (AP). AP is a national civil rights law, policy and communications organization with years of experience working in Florida. As part of this Alliance, AP will provide federal policy analysis and expertise on legal enforcement tools such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and/or Section 3 of the HUD Act of 1968 prohibiting discrimination in program and activities receiving federal funds.

### **Description of Program for which Funding is Sought**



In May of this year, before the release of the first Seize the Day State RFP, MWC, Kirwan, and RISEP, launched a two-year campaign to analyze the impact of economic recovery dollars on marginalized communities in Florida. Based on local experience in Florida as well as review of preliminary national data on the expenditure of 2008 federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds, these groups recognized that this earlier recovery funding was not subject to community participation or expert oversight and was not making community infrastructure investments where they were most urgently needed. The groups launched an effort with two primary goals: 1) to expose how public investments can create or stifle opportunity for low-income families, in particular African American and Latino families; and 2) to craft place-based, community-led strategies to advocate for equity and transparency in the use of economic recovery funds.

MWC, Kirwan and RISEP have already released a white paper and a research report. The white paper, *Building Opportunity*, outlines the economic situation of Black and Latino communities in Florida and offers some initial recommendations for increasing equity and democracy in economic stimulus spending in Florida. The research report *How Fair is Florida?* was just released in October at a town hall in the predominantly African American low-income community, Miami Gardens, garnering significant community and media attention. The report used mapping to describe the economic situation in urban Black and Latino communities in Florida and analyzed ARRA federal contract data to gauge initial equity impacts. Both reports continue to receive good local and national news coverage. This early work received partial support from both the Kellogg Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

MWC and its initial partners now propose to deepen and expand the scope of their work by targeting specific policy areas where opportunity could be expanded for low-income communities of color and women, and by including additional partners in order to reach a broader range of constituencies. This proposed new Florida Alliance is highly representative of key sectors of the state's population. Comprised of state and local grassroots organizations representing low-income people of color, immigrants, and youth, state level research and policy groups, it is a formidable coalition and the only effort of its kind in the state. The Florida Alliance will also draw on the expertise of national partners, including the Advancement Project, Right to the City Alliance, and the STAR Coalition, all of which are OSI grantees.

As a first step, the Alliance has identified two main research needs going forward that will further inform its organizing work: a stimulus tracking study consisting of quantitative and qualitative components, and policy research to identify concrete opportunities for bringing the benefits of stimulus spending to local communities. Initial research suggests weatherization and minority contractor participation are key policy areas with the potential to fulfill the intention of ARRA to bring the benefits of federal dollars to minority communities.

1. Minority Contractors -- One of the main barriers to greater minority contractor participation is the state's Department of Transportation, which is contracting out the vast majority of ARRA funded construction projects in Florida, and has obligated stimulus

dollars for projects that were already approved as part of its master plan. Thus, *new* opportunities for minority, small and emerging contractors to participate are very limited. In order to increase opportunities for minority contractors, technical assistance is necessary to assist with bidding, bonding, cash flow, and other issues. Projects need to be broken down into sizes small enough for the level of bonding that a small or emerging contractor is able to secure, and payment systems must be quick enough to meet the payroll needs of small contractors who cannot front large sums. Florida's Department of Transportation has set a goal of 8% minority contractor participation for federally funded projects, of which ARRA projects are a part, but so far there has been no reporting on how well Florida is meeting that goal. Part of the project's new research will be to gather this data and report on Florida's progress in including minority contractors, in order to make recommendations for Florida to meet and exceed its goal.

2. Weatherization Program -- Florida has yet to implement a program to weatherize homes that may provide real job opportunities for minority contractors and low-income workers. Florida has received an additional \$176 million in ARRA funding for weatherization. Currently these weatherization funds are not being used to expand opportunities for small and emerging contractors or green job training opportunities for local communities, as they could be. The Florida Alliance will work with the state Department of Community Affairs and the various local agencies to use the weatherization program as a catalyst for developing sectoral employment strategies for green jobs that target low-income Black and Latino residents. Florida has very little experience with these kinds of economic development partnerships, particularly those that include significant representation by communities and residents. OSI funding would enable the Alliance to introduce best practices from other states in an effort to ensure accountability and benefits for communities of color.

Support for the Florida Alliance will also ensure the release of future reports that will focus on other areas of ARRA spending based on community input and strategic opportunities. Such areas might include housing, health, and education. These reports will be developed by integrating the interests of grassroots partners in the four significant metropolitan areas where Alliance partners are well represented (Miami, Orlando, Tampa, and Jacksonville), hosting town hall meetings to engage the public and press further, and continuing to identify strategic opportunities to advocate for more equitable investment in communities of color.

### **Rationale for Recommendation:**

The Seize the Day Initiative recommends a grant to the Florida Alliance of \$455,000 over two years to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery. With an economy deeply dependent on the continuous growth of the housing market and on an unstable low-wage service sector, Florida has been one of the states hardest hit by the recession. The partner organizations in this Florida Alliance who represent the most politically and economically marginalized Floridians are acutely aware of the disproportionate impact this economic downturn has had on their constituencies. In effect, their constituencies represent the metaphorical "canary in the coal mine,"

portending the depth of the economic crisis and exposing where the economy is most unsound.

Key Florida Alliance partners have already begun to build a compelling case for direct stimulus resources to the most opportunity-deprived areas of the state -- not only as a means to improve the lives of those most vulnerable, but also for the long term economic viability of the entire state. Its initial research and collective work has already been recognized by national peers and allies, such as OSI grantee the STAR Coalition, which has benefited directly from MWC's on the ground advocacy for better ARRA reporting data.

Support for this Florida Alliance will enable U.S. Programs to advance its many interests, including building research sophistication and capacity among base building groups, while leveraging the early investment of funders like Kellogg and Ford. Specifically, OSI funds will be used to enhance the Florida Alliance's own research capacity and to accelerate and strengthen its collective work through the addition of new organizing partners. As a part of the proposal review process we asked MWC to submit a revised project budget and in so doing some support for staff was shaved from the Alliance's initial request. We also shared with MWC the idea of funding the Collin's Center for Public Policy because of the Center's unique access to state ARRA data (described next) as a supplemental grant to support the Florida Alliance. MWC expressed a willingness to work directly with Collins.

**Florida**

**Name of Organization:** Collins Center for Public Policy

**Tax Status:** 501 (c) (3)

**FPOS Grant Description:** This grant will support one Florida based organization working to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery, specifically focusing on state distribution of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

**Previous OSI Support:** No

**Organization Budget:** \$26M

**Project Budget:** \$440,000 over two years

**Major Sources of Support:** Florida Bar Association, South Florida Water Management District. The Kellogg Foundation is a prospect.

**Type of Support:** Project Support

**Amount Requested:** \$440,000 over two years

**Amount Recommended:** \$150,000 over two years through the Seize the Day Fund (21079)

**Term:** Two years beginning December 1, 2009

**Description of Organizations**

Established in 1988 in the name of former Florida Governor LeRoy Collins' legacy of uncompromising integrity in government and business, the Collins Center for Public

Policy (the Collins Center or Collins) seeks to find impartial solutions to controversial issues that impact the citizens of Florida and the nation. The Collins Center is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank with offices in Miami, Tallahassee and Venice. With a diverse staff of more than 20 professionals, the Center sees quality public policy analysis as only one aspect of sound problem solving. Another critical piece involves ensuring good information and analysis is targeted to reach those citizens who need it most. Its past accomplishments underscore this commitment to translating public policy research and analysis into concrete strategies that benefit vulnerable communities. For instance, to increase the standard of living for all Floridians, the Collins Center's Partners for Progress helped resolve an early 1990's African American boycott of the South Florida tourist industry, and its microenterprise project helped low-income families launch small businesses throughout the state. The Collins Center sees itself as unique in this role referring to itself as a "think tank with muddy boots."

Through this grant, the Collins Center proposes a new partnership with the Florida Office of Economic Recovery (OER). (OER will not receive OSI funding as a part of this grant.) Created this year by an executive order from the governor, OER is responsible for overseeing and tracking the distribution of Florida's federal stimulus dollars and ensuring taxpayers have access to the information needed to hold government accountable for its use of the funds. This new office is comprised of a small staff of information technology professionals, project managers, financial analysts and communications personnel. OER sees a partnership with the Collins Center as a means to expand its own capacity to translate and further disseminate stimulus-related data.

### **Description of Program for which Funding is Sought**

State and local governments that receive American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding are legally required to ensure an open and transparent process in disclosing how ARRA funds are used. To meet this requirement, many state and local government recipients are creating web sites similar to the federal site [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov) to inform the public regarding the flow of ARRA money. In Florida, Governor Charles Crist has created a web site to inform citizens about ARRA spending and its impact. He also designated the newly created Florida Office of Economic Recovery to manage this initiative.

The gist of the Collins Center's proposal is that mere disclosure of ARRA spending data is not enough. There must be systems in place to accommodate independent community participation, commentary, and input that includes economic and policy analyses. To address this need, Collins proposes to collaborate with the state's Office of Economic Recovery to play both a monitoring and facilitating role related to the state's stimulus spending. It seeks to build and host an online community, or social network, that uses the most current interactive technologies. Moving from a definition of transparency as the passive disclosure of government spending toward a new definition of transparency as a dynamic means to public participation in government spending, this website will facilitate public engagement for citizens and stakeholders to communicate with their government and with each other regarding ARRA implementation in Florida. The Office

of Economic Recovery has agreed to provide Collins with access to its data on state spending. Collins will conduct the economic and policy analysis of this data and help develop alternative policy options. It will also host virtual public discussions on spending decisions to ensure broad multi-stakeholder input.

Specifically, Collins will:

1. Collect and disseminate recovery-related spending data.
  - Establish a recognized monitoring and reporting system that will focus on ARRA dollars in the state of Florida and that is available to public policy makers, community leaders, local and national foundations, health and social service providers, and the community-at-large.
2. Promote equitable spending.
  - Provide up-to-date information that may be used to advocate for more equitable distribution of recovery funds with particular sensitivity to the needs of vulnerable populations.
3. Promote a strong civil society to monitor government decisions and spending.
  - Provide data and other tools to citizens, stakeholders, media and organizations to be active participants in public policy-making, acting as overseers, and reporters to help track and measure impact of those funds.
4. Provide information regarding the role of decision-makers in the success or failure of economic recovery and associated policies.
  - Offer a straightforward and enhanced transparent public engagement model that can be replicated by other governments at all levels.

This grant will enable Collins to dedicate a part-time economist and additional administrative support to the project. If successful, at the end of the grant period, it will have created a neutral, independent mechanism that provides consistent reporting and the space for two-way public discussion on public spending decisions, thus developing the capacity to continue monitoring government spending beyond ARRA.

### **Rationale for Recommendation:**

The Seize the Day Initiative recommends a grant to the Collins Center of \$150,000 over two years to support its ability to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery.

The unique collaboration between Collins and the Florida Office of Economic Recovery offers a level of access to government data that none of the other Seize the Day State RFP applicants have been able to attain. The Office of Economic Recovery is empowered by the Governor and as such has the necessary leverage to gather key data from the full range of executive branch agencies. This raw information will be shared with Collins' team of economists and policy analysts who will translate the data into a form that can be

readily accessed and used by citizens, nongovernmental organizations, media, and academics.

Collins and OER have never worked together before, though it is evident that both have much to gain from a successful collaboration: each can help the other to fulfill its mission. Collins does have previous experience collaborating with other state government entities. Previous state partners include the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Board of Elections, and the Department of Corrections – three agencies relevant to other U.S. Programs interests.

Collins aspires to be the kind of think tank relevant and of service to constituencies most directly impacted by changes in public policy. Yet, by its own admission, Collins has not developed the credibility it needs to build meaningful partnerships with members of Florida's grassroots organizing community. Without prescribing how these groups might work together, USP staff has expressed an interest in Collins and the members of the Florida Alliance (recommended for funding in this docket) coordinating their efforts to promote equity and transparency in economic recovery spending in Florida. We believe that Collins, with its expertise in transparency and its unprecedented access to state ARRA data, has the potential to enhance the Florida Alliance's advocacy agenda. Collins' staff have expressed a willingness to work with the Florida Alliance. And the Florida Alliance has the advocacy expertise and broad base to apply Collins' analysis and develop policy options that are responsive to the needs of Florida's most vulnerable populations.

For all the reasons stated above, staff recommends a two-year grant of \$150,000 to the Collins Center.

**California**

**Organization:** 1. California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc  
2. California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation  
3. PolicyLink (will not receive additional OSI funding from this grant)

**Tax Status:** 1. – 3. 501 (c) (3)

**FPOS Grant Description:** This grant will include three California -based organizations working to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery, specifically focusing on state distribution of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

**Previous OSI Support:** No

**Organization Budget:** 1. \$13,2561,000

**Project Budget:** \$500,000 over two years  
1. \$191,000 for 2009; \$99,000 for 2010  
2. \$50,000 for 2009; \$35,000 for 2010  
3. \$65,000 for 2009; \$60,000 for 2010

**Major Sources of Support:** None

**Type of Support:** Project Support

**Amount Requested:** \$499,000 over two years  
1. \$290,000 over two years  
2. \$85,000 over two years  
3. \$125,000 over two years



**Amount Recommended:** \$329,000 over two years through the Seize the Day Fund (21079)  
1. \$229,000 over two years  
2. \$100,000 over two years  
3. \$00,000 over two years

**Term:** Two years beginning December 1, 2009

**Description of Organizations**

The following three organizations have come together to seek Seize the Day State RFP funding to work in California and their contributions to this collective effect are described below.

1. California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc (CRLA) is a state based and state wide organization that focuses advocacy on rural and unincorporated urban communities throughout California. Its mission is to leverage public interest law for the well being of low-income rural/immigrant individuals and communities. CRLA accomplishes its mission through a combination of strategies that includes increasing access to high-quality no-cost legal services for low-income communities and promoting the participation of low-income communities in public policy.

CRLA will serve as the lead organization for this California Alliance and as such will be responsible for 1) developing the capacity of community leaders to participate in decision-making processes related to ARRA funding, 2) leveraging its network of local offices to ensure that low-income communities are notified of opportunities for public engagement, 3) tracking the allocation of ARRA infrastructure funds at the local, regional and state levels, 4) exploring the relationship between the allocation of ARRA infrastructure funds to community demographics, poverty and unemployment levels, and geography – i.e. rural v. urban, and 5) if necessary, pursuing legal advocacy to ensure equitable distribution of ARRA funds based on race and ethnicity.

2. California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation (CRLAF) is CRLA’s sister organization with more than twenty years of experience linking policy advocacy and policy change to the needs of farmworkers and other low income rural Californians. CRLAF, based in Sacramento and Fresno, focuses its advocacy and community education on improving conditions of employment for farmworkers and improving housing opportunities for low income Californians. CRLAF has extensive experience advocating for access to clean and affordable drinking water and equitable infrastructure investments in low-income communities of color in rural California. CRLAF has experience in legislative, administrative, and legal advocacy. As part of the Alliance, CRLA Foundation will lead the Alliance’s state advocacy efforts on two primary ARRA spending areas: 1) Water and 2) Transportation Funding. CRLA Foundation will also be responsible for linking its rural-based advocacy with the core urban-centered work of PolicyLink in CA to create a platform for dialogue between rural and urban communities.

3. PolicyLink is a national policy and research organization with strong history and presence in California. PolicyLink has developed a strong track record on ARRA implementation both at the state and local level. With existing support from OSI, PolicyLink is engaged in recovery work at the national level and in ten states across the country. In California, PolicyLink has been a leader on workforce, weatherization and energy programs funded through ARRA. This Alliance will leverage the experience and knowledge PolicyLink has developed, specifically its capacity to use a broad range of technologies, including GIS mapping to illustrate and analyze the results and repercussions of local, regional, and state level decisions regarding ARRA allocations. This mapping is necessary to illustrate the extent to which ARRA funds are allocated fairly and equitably to disadvantaged rural and unincorporated urban communities.

PolicyLink will receive no additional OSI support for its contribution to this Alliance and has agreed to tap its existing resources to cover a more modest role. This role includes serving as a consultant to CRLA Inc. and the CRLAF in the drafting and review of a paper that will examine ARRA's impact in two select counties of Fresno and Stanislaus, instead of writing the paper itself as originally proposed.

#### **Description of Program for which Funding is Sought**

Over the next two years, California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA), the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation (CRLAF), and PolicyLink will work to ensure that federal recovery dollars granted to California support long-term change in the State's most distressed, low-income and immigrant communities of color in the San Joaquin Valley region. (If this grant is approved, it will be the second California Alliance funded through our state alliance RFP project.)

CRLA, CRLAF and PolicyLink have worked well together for years. In 2007, the three organizations created a collaborative effort to address the unique challenges of California's low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities. The first year of this collaboration focused on conducting research that allowed the partners to understand the challenges disadvantaged rural and unincorporated communities face and to develop strategies to target resources to meet these challenges. This process involved holding several large regional convenings of diverse stakeholders, including local government representatives, non-profit leaders, community residents, foundations, legal advocates, and professional researchers. This learning led to a formal collaborative with community leaders and stakeholders dedicated to raising awareness of the persistent inequality within rural and unincorporated urban communities.

Building on the learning and momentum generated by this early work, these three partner organizations propose to form a new California Alliance that will work to ensure that federal recovery dollars granted to California support long term change in the state's most distressed, rural immigrant communities of color in the San Joaquin Valley region. Given the size of California, success will require a targeted approach. For strategic reasons, the Alliance has chosen to focus on communities within the San Joaquin Valley:

The San Joaquin Valley is one of the fastest growing areas of California and is one of the most agriculturally rich regions in our nation. Despite this, it includes some of the nation's poorest communities with a huge immigrant and migrant agricultural worker population.

Through a combination of advocacy, research, community organizing and capacity building, technical support provision, and communications, this California Alliance will build on the its early collaborative work to ensure that ARRA funding is distributed to those communities in the region with the greatest need. It will work toward achieving these five specific outcomes:

1. *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)* infrastructure dollars will be invested in low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities of color;
2. ARRA decision making processes at the local, regional and state level are more open and inclusive;
3. Residents of low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities of color understand and engage in funding allocation decision making processes;
4. Public awareness about the needs and historic disinvestment in low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities of color is increased; and
5. Public funding programs are amended to more effectively reach these communities in future funding cycles.

*ARRA infrastructure dollars will be invested in low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities of color.* In order to ensure the ARRA funding brings immediate and long-term change to California's most distressed communities, the Alliance will focus its efforts on infrastructure funding programs. Historical patterns of neglect and disinvestment across the state mean that millions of Californians do not have access to the most basic features of a safe and healthy community things like safe drinking water, sewerage treatment service, sidewalks, public transportation, and paved roads. Alliance partners will leverage their network of allies and partners to target existing funding opportunities in transportation, water infrastructure and energy programs.

*ARRA decision making processes at the local, regional and state level become more open and inclusive.* In addition to conducting advocacy focused on impacting how funds are allocated, the Alliance will work to ensure that the decision-making processes at the local, regional and state level are more open and inclusive.

*Residents are engaged in decision making processes.*

To ensure that residents of low-income rural communities are prepared to engage in the decision-making process, the Alliance will develop the capacity of community residents to participate. This work will involve identifying all agencies at the local, regional and state level that are responsible for managing and allocating ARRA funds and ensuring these local agencies abide by the legal guidelines to encourage public participation. It will also require developing a curriculum and conducting training that will build understanding among leaders in low income rural and unincorporated urban communities

of policies and practices related to the distribution of ARRA funds and enhance the capacity of community leaders to sit at local decision making tables.

*Awareness of the needs of and historic disinvestment in low-income rural and unincorporated urban communities* The Alliance will analyze both historic federal infrastructure allocation to low income rural and unincorporated urban communities of color and specifically ARRA allocation to the same communities. The Alliance will continue to track the allocation of federal infrastructure funds and also analyze the extent to which ARRA and other federal infrastructure funds have gone to the targeted communities of need.

*Public funding programs are amended to more effectively reach these communities in future funding cycles.* By tracking the distribution of ARRA funds with regard to geography, the Alliance will begin to bring attention to the way federal infrastructure funds are currently distributed while elevating alternative approaches. For instance, recommending that a portion of the State Revolving Funds that support water infrastructure programs is distributed as loans instead of grant awards while counter intuitive actually can ensure that high need communities have the necessary time to prepare their projects and applications for future rounds of stimulus funding.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The Seize the Day Initiative recommends a grant to the California Alliance of \$329,000 over two years to support its ability to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery.

Despite the explicit intent of ARRA to bring federal resources to rural American, rural and unincorporated urban areas in need are not benefiting from the stimulus dollars awarded to the states. This is because for the most part smaller rural communities can't compete with urban communities for the larger "shovel-ready" highways, roads, and bridges projects that government seeks to distribute funding quickly. Urban areas also almost always beat out rural regions on the sheer numbers of people in poverty or unemployed, making rural needs easy to overlook. Social justice advocates, along with some forward-thinking philanthropic leaders, have been for years raising concerns about the lack of resources targeted at low-income rural communities and unincorporated urban communities of color and the consequences, both social and political.

Given the size and complexity of the state of California, the Alliance has made a strong case for the wisdom of targeting the Joaquin Valley Region. Under a state funding structure that is largely and increasingly decentralized, it makes sense to build advocacy capacity in key local regions where the needs for federal stimulus dollars are greatest. There are many funding decisions regarding transportation and infrastructure still to be made at the regional and local level, and crafting a discrete targeted approach increases the Alliances' ability to bring about substantive outcomes.

When recommending initial state alliance funding last month, USP staff recognized the need to reserve some of our overall grantmaking resources for state alliances so that we might consider additional compelling proposals received from our first round, particularly for some of the larger, more complex states, such as California. As with our recommendation for additional funding for New York State efforts (described next), we recommend funding for this additional proposal from California. This new California Alliance, with its focus on rural and unincorporated urban communities, will complement the work of the recently funded California Alliance, led by the PowerPac Foundation, which is primarily urban in its focus. While we have not prescribed how these two state-based Alliance might see fit to work together, we believe both Alliances have much to learn from one another. The PowerPac Alliance has an extensive statewide network and access to state level policymakers. This new California Alliance has expressed interest in formalizing a relationship with the PowerPac Alliances and its constituencies. Likewise, the PowerPac Alliance will benefit from the knowledge and experience of this new California Alliance to explore more fully the growing dynamics and issues between urban and rural communities.

Lastly, the commitment of the three partner organizations to this project is genuine and significant. When we explained that the foundation would not make an additional grant to one of the three partner organizations, PolicyLink, because of our previous support for this organization to do stimulus work at the national level, all parties were required to reevaluate their respective roles and reconsider how best to move the project forward. PolicyLink agreed to augment its contribution to this project at a reduced level through other funds. The other two partners agreed to take on responsibility for some of the pieces of the project previously assigned to PolicyLink, such as drafting the final report. More importantly everyone agreed that, given their reduced collective capacity, the entire project should be scaled back and the budget further reduced to ensure both the integrity of the project and true alignment between capacity and targeted outcomes. This collaborative effort, at the outset, encourages staff about the potential for the proposed long-term partnership.

**New York**

**Name of Organization:** 1. The Legal Aid Society  
2. Empire Justice Center

**Tax Status:** 2 - 501 (c) (3)

**FPOS Grant Description:** This grant will support two New York State-based organizations working to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery, specifically focusing on state distribution of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

**Previous OSI Support:** Yes

**Organization Budget:** \$165.7M

**Project Budget:** \$200,000 over two years

**Major Sources of Support:** None

**Type of Support:** Project Support

**Amount Requested:** \$200,000 over two years  
1. \$50,000 for 2009, \$50,000 for 2010  
2. \$50,000 for 2009, \$50,000 for 2010

**Amount Recommended:** \$100,000 over one year through the Seize the Day Fund (21079)  
1. \$50,000 for 2009  
2. \$50,000 for 2009

**Term:**

One year beginning December 1, 2009

**Description of Organizations**

The Legal Aid Society is the nation's oldest and largest provider of legal services for low-income individuals and families. With a staff of almost 1500, Legal Aid provides civil, criminal, and juvenile rights legal assistance to low-income families and individuals in every community across the five boroughs of New York City. The Legal Aid Society also serves as the City's primary public defender for individuals accused of criminal conduct, as well as for individuals accused of parole violations. In addition to its casework, Legal Aid is frequently asked by government officials to provide information and comment regarding existing and proposed public policies affecting its clients. Housing, homelessness, income and economic security issues, health, employment, immigration law are just some of the policy advocacy issues Legal Aid engages both legislatively and administratively. Legal Aid's staff also works frequently in coalition with a number of community groups and other advocacy organizations on a wide array of issues. Two senior attorneys, Kathleen Kelleher and Kenneth Stephens, will coordinate the work of Legal Aid on this project. Legal Aid will serve as the lead organization for this project.

The Empire Justice Center is a statewide multi-issue public interest law firm with offices in Albany, Rochester, White Plains, and Central Islip that focus on changing the systems that affect poor people's lives. With its expertise in poverty law, Empire Justice undertakes research and training, acts as an informational clearinghouse, and provides litigation backup to local legal service programs and community based organizations. As an advocacy organization, Empire Justice also engages in legislative and administrative advocacy on a range of policy issues, including public assistance, child care, food stamps, immigration, housing, predatory lending, to name a few. Empire Justice also provides legal assistance to those in need and undertakes impact litigation to protect and defend the rights of disenfranchised New Yorkers. Empire Justice staff are engaged in a number of coalitions, among them Economic Security (E2), Community Reinvestment Coalition, and the Legal Services Funding Alliance. Senior Attorney, Don Friedman, along with senior attorney, Susan Antos, will coordinate the work of Empire Justice staff on this project.

**Description of Program for which Funding is Sought**

These two organizations propose to serve as a legal resource for the NYS Alliance, recently funded by the foundation. Specifically, these two organizations will come together to prepare a "Blueprint" to support the New York State Alliance and ensure that New York State draws down the maximum amount of federal stimulus dollars available for the alleviation of poverty. The grant would cover staff attorneys' time at both organizations and some modest administrative expenses.

Legal Aid and Empire Justice have a long history of working together successfully on behalf of those impacted by poverty and discrimination. One recent successful joint effort between the two organizations involved OSI's Fund for Poverty Alleviation. Not long ago, Legal Aid attorneys, Kenneth Stephens and Kathleen Kelleher, and the Empire Justice Center's senior attorney, Susan Antos, proposed to Mimi Corcoran, director of OSI's Fund for Poverty Alleviation, to use stimulus funds to finance a Back-to-School allowance for children receiving Food Stamps and other public assistance benefits. This proposal was later adopted and a donation of \$35M dollars from George Soros enabled the state to leverage \$140M in federal stimulus dollars to finance the \$175M initiative. Through this effort, this past August, over 800,000 children received Back to School payments of \$200.00 each.

With this expertise in leveraging federal and state dollars for NYS's most disadvantaged, Legal Aid and Empire Justice now propose to apply their knowledge to work with the NYS Alliance to ensure that New York State draws down the maximum amount of federal stimulus dollars available for poverty alleviation. This analysis, or Blueprint, will focus on several key substantive issues to garner maximum federal stimulus dollars, including job, education and training opportunities, public benefits, unemployment insurance benefits, and health care. The Blueprint will promote a stronger safety net and a greater distribution of stimulus dollars for those who need it most -- low-income people, people of color, women, immigrants, youth, and the formerly incarcerated.

In preparing this Blueprint, Legal Aid and Empire Justice attorneys will meet with the leadership of the new NYS Alliance to determine jointly the most strategic components of federal stimulus funds to target for further research. Once there is agreement between the NYS Alliance and the attorneys, the Legal Aid/Empire Justice legal team will analyze federal law, rules, and regulations as they relate to state law and determine how New York can maximize the draw down of these federal funds.

With input from the NYS Alliance, the legal team will draft the Blueprint, its findings and recommendations, with an eye toward the state legislative hearings and the budget process in early 2010. NYS Alliance members and their constituencies will be able to use these recommendations when formulating testimony for the legislature and/or any advocacy messages to the wider public. If properly timed there may also be an opportunity to inform the state budget process through a coordinated strategy. The Legal Aid/Empire Justice team will prepare a second report near the end of 2010 detailing the extent to which New York took advantage of the opportunities laid out in the Blueprint, which will enable Alliance partner organizations to make appropriate recommendations for 2011.

### **Rationale for Recommendation:**

The Seize the Day Initiative recommends a grant to the Legal Aid Society of \$100,000 over one year to fund The Legal Aid Society for a partnership with Empire Justice to support the work of the NYS Alliance, previously funded by OSI last month, to advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery.



In recommending initial state alliance funding, USP staff recognized the need to reserve some of our overall grantmaking resources for state alliances so that we might consider additional meritorious proposals received from our first round, particularly for some of the larger, more complex states, such as New York State. We see this one-year grant as a timely and discrete supplemental grant with the potential to greatly enhance the work of the newly funded NYS Alliance.

When we introduced this proposal to the leadership of the newly funded NYS Alliance and the response was overwhelming positive. All agreed that Legal Aid and Empire Justice' significant legal knowledge and experience leveraging federal dollars for New York State would be a tremendous resource to the larger advocacy effort. Organizers, even those with formal legal training, agree there isn't always the time or expertise to conduct the kind of comprehensive legal analysis such as the one Legal Aid and Empire Justice are proposing. They viewed the Blueprint as an important tool for them to use to strengthen their advocacy.

Legal Aid attorney Katherine Kelleher was equally enthusiastic about this potential partnership after reviewing the Alliance's original OSI proposal and speaking with key members of the Alliance including representatives from Make the Road, Community Voices Heard, and Common Cause New York. Should this grant be approved, all parties plan to meet together to determine jointly the full scope of legal work to be done and the specific areas of stimulus funding to target for legal research. Also, the groups determined that much of the monitoring function Legal Aid and Empire Justice had originally proposed to play in the second year of a grant (which we decided not to fund) was no longer necessary as Alliance members would naturally cover that role.

A supplemental grant to New York State is warranted given the state's complex rules and regulations and dysfunctional state legislature. The legal analysis provided by Legal Aid and Empire Justice will complement the research, advocacy and organizing expertise of the NYS Alliance improving the likelihood that low-income New Yorkers and other groups of interest to OSI will benefit from federal stimulus dollars.