

Memorandum

To: Aryeh Neier
From: Ann Beeson and Bill Vandenberg
Re: Seize the Day Fund Docket
Date: June 19, 2009

On behalf of the Seize the Day Initiative's U.S. Programs grantmaking committee, we're writing to share information on seven grant recommendations for Seize the Day funding. The recommendations include \$2.545 million, of which \$1.53 million would come directly from the Seize the Day Fund and \$1.015 million from co-funding with other U.S. Programs funds.

Attached you will find write-ups for two recommendations that would be solely funded through the Seize the Day Initiative: the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund (for judicial nominations work) and the Legal Action Center (for drug policy reform). Additionally, in the current dockets of the Criminal Justice and Democracy and Power Funds you'll find five recommendations for Seize the Day co-funding. These include: Justice Policy Institute and the Trust for America's Health, Criminal Justice Fund recommendations, and the Center for Civic Policy, National Council of La Raza (for Democracia-U.S.A.), and Urban Justice Center (for the Right to the City Alliance), Democracy and Power Fund recommendations. For your convenience, brief descriptions of all seven Seize the Day Initiative recommendations are included below.

As you know, we are working to move Seize the Day funds into the field as quickly as possible so that recommended grantees can act with the strategic mobility and speed required to take advantage of advocacy openings that have emerged at the national level. Should you approve these seven recommendations, since March 20th we will have granted \$6.615 million in new Seize the Day Initiative funding to 20 organizations. The organizations are key leaders in efforts to elevate the hardest OSI priority issues, including criminal justice and drug policy reform, on the national stage; advance transparency, equity, and accountability in the economic recovery; ensure public participation in policy making from constituencies that face the greatest challenges to achieving true equality and justice; and integrate advocacy and organizing innovations from the 2008 campaign into the open society organizational ecosystem.

Thank you for your time reviewing our Seize the Day Initiative recommendations. We look forward to meeting with you on Friday, June 26th, to discuss your questions and comments.

Advancing the hardest issues: Criminal justice and drug policy reform

Legal Action Center

\$600,000/ 2 years from the Seize the Day Initiative

To support the Legal Action Center's efforts to conduct public education, policy analysis and development, and advocacy at the federal and local levels to reform national drug policies, minimize the collateral consequences of convictions, and expand alternatives to incarceration and reentry programming. Specifically, OSI funding would enable LAC to expand its efforts to shift U.S. drug policy from international interdiction and domestic law enforcement to expanding health responses to addiction, with a particular emphasis on including addiction services in healthcare reform and expanding the availability of treatment for veterans and people in the criminal justice system; reducing unreasonable legal and statutory barriers to employment, higher education, and public benefits faced by people with criminal records; and targeting federal funding, especially the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and other initiatives aimed at stimulating the economy, to expand alternatives to incarceration and programs for people after prison. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interest in reforming U.S. drug policy; expanding alternatives to incarceration and supporting reentry infrastructure in high-incarceration communities; and increasing access to housing, health and mental health care, education, and employment for people with criminal records.

Trust For America's Health

\$155,000/ 18 months (\$90,000 from OSI's International Harm Reduction Policy and \$65,000 from the Seize the Day Initiative)

To support the Trust for America's Health's efforts to conduct public education about the scientific basis and effectiveness of needle exchange programs and to broaden the coalition of organizations supporting needle exchange. Specifically, OSI funding would enable TFAH to step up its efforts to expand the public health responses to addiction, by working to reframe the needle exchange debate from strictly an HIV/AIDS/substance abuse issue to a general public health issue; conducting systematic outreach to a broad range of policymakers and organizations focused on healthcare, public health, criminal justice, and other related issues; educating the Obama Administration and Congress about the effectiveness of needle exchange in disease prevention; and creating a broad public-health-based coalition by expanding its outreach beyond the HIV/AIDS advocacy community to leading organizations and individuals representing health, public health, and public safety, among others. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interest in decriminalizing drug use by reframing and linking drug policy debate to public health and harm reduction approaches, pressing the public health benefits nationally, and internationally, of lifting the ban on needle exchange, and by building partnerships and collaborations for drug policy reform across communities, sectors, and issues.

Justice Policy Institute

\$390,000 (\$225,000 general support from the Criminal Justice Fund and \$165,000 in project support from the Seize the Day Fund)

To support JPI's work to reduce instances of adult and juvenile incarceration through research, communications, organizing, and policy advocacy; and to support an emerging network of criminal justice advocates in Maryland to significantly advance policy reforms; and to develop a policy report which contextualizes and compares incarceration rates and social structures of the United States with other Western nations in order to encourage reform that reduces incarceration rates. JPI is a Washington, DC-based think-tank committed to

reducing society's reliance on incarceration by promoting both national and local policy reform and has evolved into one of the nation's most thoughtful and forward thinking voices for crafting workable solutions to problems plaguing our juvenile and criminal justice system. The organization has played a pivotal role in creating a public policy context in which voices for progressive juvenile and criminal justice reform can be heard. Few national criminal justice advocacy organizations have garnered as much national media attention for their timely, high impact research and analysis or accolades from their local community partners.

Advancing the hardest issues: Fair and independent judiciary

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund

\$200,000, 1 year project support from the Seize the Day Initiative

To support the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund's project on federal judicial nominations, including providing one-time funding to take advantage of the opportunities created by the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court for education and engagement of diverse and important constituencies. Specifically, this funding would allow LCCREF to establish and sustain three to four state-level nominations coalitions for one year in states of long-term value for nominations advocacy. The goal of the grant will be to build state-level capacity that can then be supported by longer-term funding from the Transparency and Integrity Fund in collaboration with the Democracy and Power Fund and state-level funders.

Expanding public participation in advocacy and organizing

The Urban Justice Center (fiscal sponsor) / Right to the City Alliance

\$500,000/2years (\$300,000 from D&P and \$200,000 from Seize the Day)

To support the Brooklyn-based Right to the City Alliance (RTTC), an emerging national alliance of more than 50 urban base-building organizations and allies committed to building a movement for urban justice, human rights, and democracy. RTTC partner organizations are predominantly led by center city residents who are largely from people of color and lower-income economic backgrounds. RTTC emerged in 2007 in response to a call for a united response to gentrification, the displacement of low-income people of color from their historic neighborhoods, and the need to confront negative fiscal and social policy changes occurring in cities across the country. Operating in seven states and more than a dozen urban jurisdictions, RTTC is building a national urban agenda and network of low-income families and communities. Its overarching goal is to elevate locally initiated work around housing, racial justice, urban development, and civic participation to shift national public opinion and lead to urban policy changes. This general support recommendation follows a Democracy and Power Fund planning grant to RTTC in 2008. Seize the Day Initiative co-funding would support capacity building for the RTTC nationally and for its local anchor organizations, specifically helping the alliance increase national staffing for training new community leaders on issue advocacy and developing new, national economic justice policy campaigns.

National Council of La Raza (fiscal sponsor) / Democracia-U.S.A.

\$500,000/2 years (\$350,000 to be dispensed in year one and \$150,000 in year two; \$300,000 Democracy and Power Fund; \$200,000 Seize the Day for capacity building)

To support Democracia U.S.A. (D-USA), a Miami-based national organization that advances civic engagement among the nation's fastest growing demographic group by conducting nonpartisan voter registration and voter education in Latino communities. D-USA also conducts Leadership Academies to train and educate local leaders to promote sustained civic engagement by working beyond the electoral cycles to keep Latinos engaged on issues and the American political process. Widely recognized in the field as one of the highest quality large scale civic engagement organizations, D-USA is expanding to serve other parts of the country where the Latino population is growing and also seeking to build the internal capacity it needs to ensure that it will grow sustainably. In addition to a renewal of its Democracy and Power Fund general support grant, additional funding has been recommended by the Seize the Day grantmaking committee for D-USA's capacity building efforts, including senior staff and board development and enhanced communications capacity.

Expanding public participation/ Integrating advocacy innovations

Center for Civic Policy / General Support

\$200,000/ 2 years (\$100,000 Democracy and Power Fund and \$100,000 Seize the Day)

To support the Center for Civic Policy, an Albuquerque-based organization that utilizes innovative strategies to build 501c3 non-partisan civic engagement capacity and to advance social justice issues from the state level up. CCP has piloted a high impact and well regarded model of building state-based capacity in New Mexico in order to effectively shape the state issue landscape and shift public will toward social justice issues, including criminal justice reform, governmental transparency and accountability, and climate change issues. Specifically, the Center engages ordinary people in the policy debates that affect their daily lives through increasing voter turnout; educating and mobilizing the public on issues; and training new leaders for civic life. At a time when building state-based capacity is vitally important to advancing more social justice friendly local, state, and federal agendas, CCP is in heavy demand nationally for its state power building expertise. Following CCP executive director Eli Il Yong Lee's participation on a post-election strategies panel at the USP December board meeting, CCP was recently invited to speak with OSI-Baltimore about state power building strategies, too. Seize the Day Initiative funding – through matching support from the Democracy and Power Fund – would underwrite the Center's work to provide strategic consulting assistance to state-based organizations around the country that are seeking to build ground up power to impact local, state, and federal policy agendas.