

To: OSI Programs Board

From: Sherrilyn Ifill

Re: Equality and Opportunity Fund

Date: September 22, 2009

I recommend board approval of the 2010 budget for the Equality and Opportunity Fund (EOF). As you know, EOF includes four core areas of OSI's work – racial justice, immigrant rights, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) rights, and gender justice. The Fund has undergone significant review and restructuring in the last 18 months. The new program director Raquiba LaBrie along with staff, has developed a strategic plan for the coming three years that envisions a funding program that will encourage grantees to undergird their equality work with reflection, the development of a clear agenda and collaboration with groups working across the four core program areas.

The 2010 budget reflects the priorities as identified in the EOF strategic plan. Key among these is the support of advocacy that advances multiple areas of program emphasis. Promoting an integrated approach to equality work across the four key EOF program areas of focus has both substantive and pragmatic value. Although the plan contemplates continued support for anchor organizations within the respective fields EOF supports, a significant focus of the Fund's emphasis will be on increasing the capacity of these groups to identify a clear set of shared priorities, collaborate across fields, and develop an advocacy approach and agenda that bridges issues and constituencies.

The Fund also includes several special initiatives: Immigration Innovation, Neighborhood Stabilization (NSI) and Equal Justice Works. In addition, the Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA), headed by Shawn Dove, is focused on addressing the large scale implications of the economic, social political and educational dislocation of black men and boys. Each of these initiatives is budgeted separately.

EOF's recommended grantmaking budget for 2010 is \$9 million. This reflects an increase of \$1.5 million over 2009. Grantmaking budget allocations for each of the Fund's core programs areas are roughly equal (\$1.5 million each), with funding for Racial Justice and Immigrant Rights budgeted at \$2million -- slightly higher than LGBTQ Rights and Gender Justice. A line item of \$1.5 million has been allocated for the support of EOF's intersectional work.

The opportunities for collaboration across OSI program areas are rich and diverse. The possibility of immigration reform emerging as a central issue on the national agenda in 2010

will seriously challenge grantees in this area, but will also provide opportunities for collaborative funding between EOF and Democracy and Power (grassroots organizing and civil engagement), Transparency & Integrity (challenges to privatization of detention facilities). These same opportunities for collaboration exist with the work of CBMA, NSI, the Criminal Justice Fund and with OSI-Baltimore.

The strategic plan and budget for EOF reflect a thoughtful projection of the support needed to address the most urgent equality issues facing marginalized groups in our country, and a commitment to promoting collaboration within OSI and among grantees.