

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Aryeh Neier  
**FROM:** Ann Beeson & Erlin Ibreck  
**DATE:** July 17, 2009  
**RE:** Strategic Opportunities Fund - July 24, 2009 Docket Recommendations

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The Strategic Opportunities Fund (SOF) recommends seven grants in this docket, five of which are from OSI-DC for the DC Community Grants Initiative that receives an annual allocation of \$200,000 from SOF. The DC office makes these grants in consultation with SOF.

The priorities for the current DC Community Grants Initiative cycle remain the same as last year with the following as their two priority areas:

*Youth Leadership and Development – organizations that build leadership skills, foster civic engagement and/or promote development among diverse young people*

*Need of Low income Families – organizations that provide direct services, engage in advocacy, and offer solutions to the unique problems faced by low and no-income families*

The process for selecting organizations is that each year OSI-DC selects 3 grants administrators who solicit suggestions from staff, meet with local funders and engage in their own research to compile a pool of organizational candidates for funding. Recommendations are made to a staff advisory board including the grants administrators who then decide on which organizations to invite to submit proposals. Their five funding recommendations that appear in this docket are to support two organizations that serve the needs of low-income families; two organizations that provide youth leadership and development activities and a recommendation for renewed funding of the Washington AIDS Partnership.

The Strategic Opportunities Fund (SOF) and the Transparency and Integrity Fund (TIF) are jointly recommending a bridge grant to the Greater New Orleans Foundation (GNOF) which is the conduit for the re-granting and oversight of an emerging coalition of local organizations working on transparency issues. The coalition - known as New Orleans Coalition for Open Governance (NOCOG) - is focused on three areas: building greater civic support for good governance; enhancing the oversight of revenues and expenditures; and developing additional transparency in information and media. SOF and TIF recommended a grant earlier this year to build on momentum that catalyzed around several meetings that were held between TIF and SOF staff on the one hand, and key local organizations working on transparency issues, as well as with GNOF staff, on the other. The bridge grant will enable the coalition members to continue developing a

longer term strategic plan of action that they will likely submit to OSI and other funders to support its implementation.

Finally, we are recommending a two year grant to support the U.S. Human Rights Fund's Sub-Fund for Domestic Human Rights Accountability to provide coordinated financial and technical support to the Campaign for a New Domestic Human Rights Agenda and related human rights accountability initiatives. This grant will strengthen mechanisms for the protection of human rights and thus advances the full range of U.S. Programs priorities.