

**U.S. PROGRAMS
STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES FUND (SOF Program Code 21081)**

Staff	Organization	Requested	Recommended	Term
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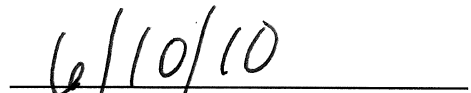
Gulf Coast

Erin/Tom	CBNO - MAC Foundation (as fiscal sponsor for the New Orleans Coalition on Open Governance)	\$ 23,000	\$ 23,000	4 months
Erin/Tom	Nonprofit Knowledge Works	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000	6 months

Recommended: \$ 47,000

SOF TOTAL RECOMMENDED: \$ 47,000


Approval Signature


Date

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ann Beeson
FROM: Erlin Ibreck
CC: Thomas Hilbink
DATE: June 7, 2010
RE: Strategic Opportunities Fund – Grant Recommendations

Attached for your review and approval are two write-ups to support time-sensitive advocacy and communications projects linked to the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Capitalizing on a likely spike in local, state, and national attention to the city of New Orleans five years after the storm, the New Orleans Coalition for Open Governance (NOCOG) member organizations propose to engage in multi-platform advocacy efforts about the need for greater open governance in the city, the impacts of corrupt and inaccessible government on specific communities, and NOCOG's innovative approach to challenging the status quo. One grant will be managed by the Committee for a Better New Orleans and will enable several NOCOG member organizations to develop distinct but interwoven multi-media projects. A second grant to Nonprofit Knowledge Works will support the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center's efforts to create effective data visualizations as part of GNOCDC's publication of the *New Orleans Index*.

The products of both grants will also be integrated into OSI's multimedia project looking at advocacy work in New Orleans five years after Katrina – part of OSI's plan for attracting a broader funding base and wider attention to the innovative work in New Orleans. Tom is the program officer on both of these grant recommendations so please feel free to let him know if you have specific questions on either grant recommendation. I will also be happy to respond to general questions about the broader NOLA multi-media initiative.

Name of Organization: Nonprofit Knowledge Works

Tax Status: 501(c)(3) public charity

Purpose of Grant: to enhance the capacity of the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center (a project of Nonprofit Knowledge Works) to create high-quality, effective data visualizations for the 5th anniversary of Katrina.

FPOS Grant Description: This grant would support the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center's efforts to create effective data visualizations as part of GNOCDC's publication of the *New Orleans Index*. GNOCDC is a member of the OSI-funded New Orleans Coalition on Open Governance. This grant represents an ongoing effort to build Coalition member advocacy capacity.

Previous OSI Support: n/a

Organization Budget: \$1,030,065

Project Budget: \$42,455

Other Sources of Support:

Community Revitalization Fund	\$3,013
Greater New Orleans Foundation (OSI)	\$15,684

Amount Requested: \$23,758.22 over three and a half months

Amount Recommended: \$24,000 over six months

Term: May 1, 2010 to October 31, 2010

Description of Organization

Nonprofit Knowledge Works is a New Orleans, LA-based nonprofit created in 2005 by the merger of the Center for Nonprofit Resources and the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center. The organization's work is driven by the belief that evidence (data, published research, and community perspective) is an essential foundation for the development of effective social programs. The organization works with the New Orleans area nonprofit sector to increase their ability to provide information-driven, systemic and effective solutions to community problems. Knowledge Works focuses on:

- Providing access to timely and accurate data
- Investigating the way that nonprofit organizations use information in planning
- Implementing and evaluating nonprofit activities, and
- Supporting improvements in information systems.

The Greater New Orleans Community Data Center (GNOCDC) is now a project of Nonprofit Knowledge Works.

Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought

GNOCDC seeks support to build its capacity to develop more effective ways of presenting its data to the public. Specifically, it seeks funding to develop cutting edge data visualizations for use in efforts to tell the story of New Orleans five years after Hurricane Katrina by GNOCDC, members of the New Orleans Coalition on Open Governance (NOCOG), the *New Orleans Lens*, other advocacy groups, and the media.

Each year since Hurricane Katrina, GNOCDC has published a new edition of the *New Orleans Index*, a comprehensive guide to demographic, economic, and other information about the state of the city in the post-hurricane recovery process. These publications have been used by advocacy groups, members of the media, and government officials to help make the case for policy reforms, press for new investments, and hold officials to account for recovery efforts. While the *Index* has always used a mix of narrative, tables, and charts to represent the data, GNOCDC is now seeking to improve the *Index*'s impact by making use of cutting-edge information design and technology. By building this capacity as part of the fifth anniversary *Index* publication process, GNOCDC will be able to employ these skills in its own ongoing work while also sharing these skills with advocates and others in the community going forward.

GNOCDC has already worked with other members of NOCOG to assess what kinds of data visualizations would be most helpful to community-based advocacy groups. With that information in hand, GNOCDC will work with a graphic designer to develop data visualizations for the *Index* that will tell a story in their own right while also enhancing the text. In preparing its work related to the fifth anniversary, the *New Orleans Lens* will work with the same graphic designer (funded through a separate grant, attached), allowing for maximum overlap in visualization style and substance.

While the *Index* is being printed, GNOCDC will produce and distribute a YouTube video briefing that makes use of the data visualizations from the *Index*. This video will be usable by the *New Orleans Lens*, bloggers, and others who wish to incorporate GNOCDC data into their stories. GNOCDC will also maintain a bank of the most innovative visualizations by those who use GNOCDC's raw data.

Rationale for Recommendation

The Strategic Opportunities Fund and the Transparency & Integrity Fund recommend a grant of \$24,000 over six months. This grant would advance SOF's goal of supporting innovative, integrated efforts to promote open society in the City of New Orleans. The grant would advance TIF's goals of expanding the advocacy capacity of state and local transparency and integrity efforts in the city of New Orleans as well as supporting work that makes use of cutting edge data visualizations.

The fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina is sure to bring a great deal of media attention to evaluate the fate of the recovery effort and the future of the city. This seems only more sure given the ongoing tragedy of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. At the same time, advocates in New Orleans have a reasonable concern that the fifth anniversary may be the last time that the media focuses this much attention on the post-Katrina landscape. This all adds up to the need to assure that information and advocacy efforts have maximum impact.

GNOCDC's data, and the *New Orleans Index*, have played a major part in shaping media discussions of the city post-Katrina. In print and in electronic (PDF) form, the *Index* has provided a factual foundation for analysis of recovery efforts and assessment of local, state, and government programs and policies. Yet over the course of the past 18 months, in significant part due to OSI support and engagement, GNOCDC staff members – most notably Deputy Director Denice Ross – have developed a better sense of how GNOCDC can better use, disseminate, and represent the information it collects. The desire to develop more innovative data visualizations is evidence of exciting progress in GNOCDC's thinking about its role and approach. A modest grant from OSI at this time would allow GNOCDC to act on this new momentum.

This grant would operate as part of a larger effort by NOCOG members and OSI grantees to highlight innovative new advocacy work related to open governance in New Orleans. The companion grant to the CBNO-MAC Foundation would support advocacy efforts by the other coalition members. The products of these two grants will be integrated into OSI's multimedia project looking at New Orleans five years after Katrina.

Name of Organization: CBNO-MAC Foundation

Tax Status: 501(c)(3) public charity

Purpose of Grant: to support advocacy and capacity building of members of the New Orleans Coalition on Open Governance in connection with the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina

FPOS Grant Description: This grant would support the Committee for a Better New Orleans (CBNO) and the larger OSI-funded New Orleans Coalition on Open Governance's efforts to create an effective multi-media advocacy campaign around the 5th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. This grant represents an ongoing effort to build Coalition member advocacy capacity.

Previous OSI Support: \$51,000
Strategic Opportunities Fund (2009) \$51,000
(through sub-grant from Greater New Orleans Foundation)

Organization Budget: \$312,500

Project Budget: \$23,000

Other Sources of Support: n/a

Amount Requested: \$23,000 over four months

Amount Recommended: \$23,000

Term: June 1, 2010 to November 30, 2010

Description of Organization

The CBNO-MAC Foundation, doing business as the Committee for a Better New Orleans (CBNO), was created by the merger of CBNO with the Metropolitan Area Committee in 2001. An organization whose membership and leadership is representative of race, age, and class diversity in the city, CBNO works as a catalyst and convener to bring the full spectrum of voices to the table in efforts to solve New Orleans' most pressing problems. Over the years CBNO has worked on public education, city management, economic development, housing, public safety, and transportation. Most recently, CBNO's Community Participation Project has been spearheading efforts to create a permanent set of structures and processes to allow greater community input and civic engagement in municipal decision making and policy reform. CBNO is a member of the New Orleans

Coalition on Open Governance (NOCOG) and will manage this grant for the various NOCOG members involved in the project.

Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought

The members of the New Orleans Coalition on Open Governance seek funding for a time-sensitive advocacy and communications project linked to the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Capitalizing on a likely spike in local, state, and national attention to the city of New Orleans five years after the storm, NOCOG member organizations propose to engage in a multi-platform advocacy effort about the need for greater open governance in the city, the impacts of corrupt and inaccessible government on specific communities, and NOCOG's innovative approach to challenging the status quo. By engaging in such advocacy at this time, NOCOG members hope to build greater advocacy capacity going forward – including the ability to use multi-media technologies to present and disseminate stories and messages to a variety of communities.

The project would have a number of distinct, but interwoven pieces:

1. The *New Orleans Lens* (the *Lens*) will collaborate with the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center (GNOCDC) and a graphic designer to develop and produce data visualizations for use in the *Lens*' coverage and analysis of the fifth anniversary.¹ This work will serve to help the *Lens* build permanent in-house capacity to produce infographics.
2. CBNO, the Neighborhoods Partnership Network (NPN) and Puentes will work with NOCOG to produce a series of videos (disseminated via YouTube) highlighting for their constituencies why responsive government matters in each community and focus on recent victories won in significant part thanks to NOCOG advocacy. For instance, Puentes will connect open governance to the concerns of the Latino community in New Orleans, focusing on recent state-level victories on language access reforms. NPN will look at the good and bad of post-storm rebuilding programs, with a focus on recent municipal policy changes related to contracting and sub-contracting processes. And CBNO will focus on the effort to create a citizen participation infrastructure within city government. These videos will be produced in-house, again in order to build technical capacity to engage in multi-media advocacy efforts.
3. All groups in NOCOG will participate in presentation and content development skills-building training that will help all become better storytellers and advocates, more able to explain in clear and compelling terms why open governance matters for New Orleanians.

Rationale for Recommendation

The Strategic Opportunities Fund and the Transparency & Integrity Fund recommend a grant of \$23,000 over six months. This grant would advance SOF's goal of supporting innovative, integrated efforts to promote open society in the City of New Orleans. The

¹ GNOCDC's part in this collaborative effort will be covered by a separate companion grant, attached to this write-up.

grant would advance TIF's goal of expanding the advocacy capacity of state and local transparency and integrity efforts in the city of New Orleans.

The fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina is sure to bring a great deal of media attention to evaluate the fate of the recovery effort and the future of the city. This seems surer given the ongoing tragedy of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. At the same time, advocates in New Orleans have a reasonable concern that the fifth anniversary may be the last time the media focuses this much attention on the post-Katrina landscape. This all adds up to the need to assure that information and advocacy efforts have maximum impact.

The groups in NOCOG have been working closely together for more than a year to develop working relationships and an advocacy agenda for open governance in the City of New Orleans. The innovative and unique aspect of the Coalition is the way it brings together community-based advocacy organizations with data groups and good government advocates in working for open governance. With community outreach and communication at the core of NOCOG's work, good government organizations have had to think in new ways about priorities and messaging on the importance of open governance to a diverse audience. And community groups have had to work hard to connect the transparency issues to the day-to-day lives of New Orleans residents. This grant would help expand NOCOG member capacity to engage in effective outreach work.

Through this work, NOCOG members would gain new skills and confidence in advocacy. And the products of these grants will be integrated into OSI's multimedia project looking at advocacy work in New Orleans five years after Katrina – part of OSI's plan for attracting a broader funding base and wider attention to the innovative work in New Orleans.

CBNO will manage the grant for the various NOCOG groups. Led by Keith Twitchell, CBNO has built strong relationships with the other NOCOG members that make it a natural home for the grant. Further, making CBNO the recipient (rather than GNOF, as has been the case with NOCOG support thus far) means that administrative costs will be negligible.