

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES FUND

CATCH UP DOCKET – OCTOBER 24, 2011

PROPOSED GRANT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Strategic Opportunities Fund (SOF) responds to unforeseen crises or open society challenges that impact the mission of U.S. Programs; conducts research and development in new areas of interest to USP; and implements initiatives that are short-term and of high impact. For the final 2011 docket, SOF recommends seven grants, five of which are for approval by the President and three by the Interim Director.

Four of these recommendations are for tie-off grants that relate to SOF's research and development initiative, which has sought to raise awareness of the potential for art and culture to advance a broad spectrum of social justice concerns and issues that are specifically relevant to U.S. Programs' priorities. These four grants are recommended to organizations which have served as core grantee partners for SOF through the course of this R&D initiative.

Tie-off grants are also recommended for a special initiative grantee that worked on the census as well as an organization that received discrete funding over a number of years because of its unique application of a civil liberties lens to child welfare issues.

Finally a short-term project support co-funded grant is recommended for a 2011 annual conference, which will address issues of core concern to several Funds within U.S. Programs.

Art & Culture Advancing Social Justice

Alternate ROOTS

Atlanta, GA

\$135,000 over 1 year (general support; tie-off)

Alternate ROOTS, founded in 1976, is an organization based in the South and headquartered in Atlanta, GA, whose mission is to support the creation and presentation of original art in all its forms, which is rooted in a particular community of place, tradition or spirit. As a coalition of cultural workers, ROOTS members strive to be allies in the elimination of all forms of oppression. In particular, the organization is committed to social and economic justice and the protection of the natural world and addresses these concerns through its programs and services. Alternate ROOTS' core programs include: the Community/Artist Partnership Program, supporting residencies that foster collaborations between artists and community-based organizations; Resources for Social Change, through which ROOTS provides trainings and facilitates learning exchanges related to methodologies, tools and techniques for creating social change through the arts for artists, activists and organizers; and the Annual Meeting, a week-long convening that is centered around art-making, presentation of works-in-process, professional development workshops, seminars, and musical performances. Across these

programs – and as progressive community-based artists – ROOTS members are grounded in the continuum of the citizen artist working for change, manifesting the principles of participatory democracy.

Appalshop

Whitesburg, KY

\$125,000 over 1 year (general support; tie-off)

Founded in the coalfields of eastern Kentucky in 1969, Appalshop is a multi-disciplinary arts and education center that produces original films, video, theater, music and spoken-word recordings, radio, photography, multimedia, and print publications. Appalshop shapes its programs around the belief that communities have the right to control their own culture, land and resources and to have a voice in public life. To this end, Appalshop works to broaden and deepen cultural and civic participation in Appalachia and nationally, guided by the belief that effective place-based social change begins locally and expands nationally in coalition with others who have direct knowledge of issues. Working with a wide range of activists inside and outside the Appalachian region, Appalshop uses its multi-media resources to address complex intersectional issues that include economic justice, racial inequality, human rights, the criminal justice system and immigrant rights – with the belief that those who directly experience social injustice must participate in devising and enacting equitable solutions that draw upon cultural strengths. Through its Appalachian Media Institute (AMI), Appalshop supports youth artists to develop social issue-based media projects and to build their capacity as emerging leaders

First Peoples Fund

Rapid City, SD

\$150,000 over 1 year (general support; tie-off)

Founded in 1995, First Peoples Fund advances social justice for Indigenous communities by providing grant support to artists who root their work in Indigenous cultural traditions and who are committed to building community power as part of a sacred honor system. The Fund seeks to strengthen that honor system through its *Community Spirit* grants to artists who uphold the traditions and way of life of their peoples; maintain direct ties to their communities; and nurture youth creativity and leadership. Through its *Cultural Capital* program, the Fund empowers these artists to develop local networks, leverage additional resources, and access technical assistance. As an anchor organization and leader in the field of art and social justice, First Peoples Fund builds the capacity of artists-as-change-agents across Indigenous communities and connects these communities to non-Native artists, organizers, and advocates who are advancing racial and economic justice across the country.

Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development

Arcata, CA

\$200,000 over 1 year (general support; tie-off)

The Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development is a leading Indigenous social change organization with a mission to promote Native arts and cultural expression as a strategy for maintaining traditional wisdom, promoting intergenerational leadership, and sustaining communities. Through grantmaking, training, and technical assistance, Seventh Generation supports established and emerging Indigenous artists and culture-bearers including traditional

storytellers; artisans, such as basketweavers, potters, and carvers; performing artists working in Hip-Hop, theater, poetry, and other expressive forms; and digital media-makers. Founded in 1977, Seventh Generation Fund emerged as Indigenous leaders – elders, young people, community activists – responded to the call from their communities for cultural revitalization and culturally appropriate sustainability strategies. The organization derives its name from a precept of the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy) which calls upon leaders to consider the impact of their actions on the seventh generation to come. Today, Seventh Generation artists draw upon traditional knowledge to develop culturally-based creative practices that advance social justice in, by, and for grassroots Indigenous communities.

Special Initiatives

2010 Census Initiative:

SOF recommends the following grant to an organization supported through its 2010 Census Initiative, which was developed in partnership with the Democracy and Power Fund in grantmaking year 2009 to support outreach efforts in communities of concern to USP. This grant will provide renewed support to build upon the momentum of census-related work and to expand the depth, breadth, substance, and impact of civic engagement activities in hard-to-reach communities.

National Congress of American Indians Fund

Washington, DC

Amount TBD over 1 year (renewal; project support; SOF tie-off)

The National Congress of American Indians was founded in 1944 in response to termination and assimilation policies that the United States forced upon the tribal governments in contradiction to their treaty rights and status as sovereigns. The NCAI Fund (NCAIF) is the organization's 501(c)(3) arm and works to inform the public and Congress about the governmental rights of American Indians and Alaska Natives. In 2003, NCAIF established the Policy Research Center (PRC) to serve as a national tribal research center guided by a diverse and distinguished advisory council. The PRC provides tribal leaders with the best available knowledge to make strategic and proactive policy decisions that are rooted in a framework of Native wisdom and that positively impact the future of Native peoples. This project support grant will enable NCAIF/PRC to build upon the success of its *Indian Country Counts* 2010 Census campaign – which promoted an accurate census count in Indigenous communities throughout Indian Country – and will support the organization's work to shift the discourse on Native policy from a problem-focused approach to proactive, future-thinking strategy development.

Cross-Program Convening Support:

Neighborhood Funders Group

Washington, DC

\$30,000 over 6 months (renewal; project support; co-funded with the Equality and Opportunity Fund)

The Neighborhood Funders Group (NFG) is a membership association of grantmaking institutions whose mission is to strengthen the capacity of organized philanthropy to understand and support community-based efforts to organize and improve the economic and social fabric of low-income urban neighborhoods and rural communities. NFG provides resources, learning opportunities, and professional development activities to its national membership of grantmakers and encourages the support of policies and practices that advance economic and social justice. This project grant will support NFG's 2011 Annual Conference, which will highlight the power of place-based philanthropy and will draw specific attention to issues of concern to USP including the foreclosure crisis; youth organizing for social justice; cradle-to-college advocacy and support for low-income communities and communities of color; the power of art and culture to advance social justice; and the ongoing work of advocates and organizers in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast to rebuild and sustain their communities.

Legacy

National Coalition for Child Protection Reform

Alexandria, VA

\$50,000 over 1 year (general support; tie-off)

The National Coalition for Child Protection Reform (NCCPR) is dedicated to making the child welfare system better serve America's most vulnerable children by seeking comprehensive change in the child protective system. In this capacity NCCPR advocates for due process and open court hearings in child welfare cases, while promoting informed media coverage of these cases. In poor neighborhoods, fear of child protective services is a daily fact of life. It is a reasonable fear. The normal protections of due process of law taken for granted in other aspects of American life do not apply in child welfare. Homes can be searched and children can be strip searched without a warrant, children can be taken from their homes without a court order, indigent families often have no right to an attorney, the standard of proof at most proceedings is merely "preponderance of the evidence" and, in most states, all court hearings are secret. In other spheres, similar infringements on civil liberties have prompted the progressive community to mobilize. But when the topic is child abuse, many progressives make an exception. That exception has done enormous harm to children. NCCPR believes in civil liberties without exception. The mission and work of this organization – to protect the most vulnerable in our society and to ensure their rights are not compromised – addresses a fundamental tenet of Open Society Foundations' mission.