

# Open Places Initiative (OPI)

## A Place-Based Justice Initiative: Initial Steps Toward a Theory of Change

This is an initial effort to describe the context and purpose of the Open Society Foundations Open Places Initiative. Open Places aims to make a number of investments at the local level to advance specific justice and equity objectives by developing sophisticated civic capacity. Each investment is intended to be responsive to the local context. In addition, each investment is expected to achieve meaningful impact at the local/regional level, build on local leadership and assets, and develop and employ multiple capacities and tools. Open Places seeks to achieve this through long-term investments (a minimum of three to five years) in a select number of sites (probably three to five), identified through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process involving 16 medium-sized places.

Open Places draws on a strong Open Society Foundations orientation toward acknowledging the importance of local leadership and knowledge in addressing core equity and justice concerns and a belief that more sophisticated civic capacity is critical, given the new potential and challenges that will arise at the local level in the coming years. This memo seeks to help clarify the assumptions inherent in the program by describing operating principles of U.S. Programs (USP), offering observations about the potential of local entities and the challenges they face, and providing further information about this initiative.

### A. The New Initiative in Context:

As a foundation, we believe that our core principles and commitments to democracy, justice, and equity require national investments and strategies, given the fundamental role of the federal government in policy and resource allocation. As a national (and international) foundation we seek change at a level consistent with our resources and capacities. More specifically, U.S. Programs has long been committed to issues related to criminal justice reform, the full participation of racial and ethnic minorities in civic and economic life, and robust democratic institutions such as an independent media and judiciary. Thus, we will continue to invest in key civic institutions whose work promotes our open society values. These strategic investments support national and place-based organizations in fields of interest and advance issue-specific, frequently time-limited strategies. We expect to continue to invest in specific places or institutions as warranted.

This new initiative reflects an additional strategic approach. It posits that, to promote, protect, and fully understand open society values in the United States and advance specific U.S. Programs policy objectives, it is necessary to build and/or support locally-grounded and governed institutions, capable of using multiple strategies and tools. It also recognizes that key open society issues are often interrelated and that simultaneous work on several objectives can reveal new approaches and accelerate positive reform. The Open Places Initiative draws upon lessons learned from OSI-Baltimore's experience and other place-based justice initiatives by the public and philanthropic sectors. We believe that key decisions about core open society issues are increasingly made at the local level, and that demographic changes and broad economic shifts will make justice-oriented civic capacity at the local/regional level particularly critical in the years to come.

## **B. Significance of Places in 2012/2013**

In what some have termed a “disruptive moment” in the fundamentals of public sector operations, we can look at the fiscal cliff (whatever its outcome) and recognize potentially seismic shifts in intergovernmental relations. While states and localities have always had significant responsibility in some fields (criminal justice, education), diminishing federal resources and capacities will make local government decision-making all the more critical in these and other areas, ranging from the social safety net to economic opportunity and competitiveness. This trend will be exacerbated given unprecedented state budget challenges. Even when there is strong federal leadership and funding for initiatives intended to promote justice and equity concerns (e.g., Race to the Top, Sustainable Community Planning Grants), their sustainability and effective implementation requires significant local capacity to boost (or force) attention to open society concerns. Thus, when the metropolitan thought leader Bruce Katz notes that “[a] ‘new normal’ in leadership could soon define [this] nation where metros lead and the federal government and state follow,” it is incumbent on us to develop the civic capacity to ensure that justice and equity concerns are advanced.

A second “disruptive” trend involves the large-scale demographic changes at the local level. These are upending traditional political dynamics, reshaping relationships between city and suburb, and redefining core issues that challenge local communities. These changes will become even more profound in the coming decades. In the face of this transformation, the civic capacity to advance equity and justice concerns requires new abilities to engage and inform diverse constituencies and ensure that underrepresented communities are full participants in the dynamic shifts taking place at the local level.

Finally, the potential and experience of innovation by local governments are increasing and occurring across the partisan divide. Necessity is, in fact, partly the mother of this innovation as locals grapple with decreasing budgets, increasing responsibilities, and higher expectations by the public for efficiency, information and transparency; philanthropy has supported these changes to help localities take advantage of technology and other advances. As the place where the “rubber meets road,” local governments desire (even if they imperfectly realize) the value of flexibility, change, leadership, and partnerships with the private sector. This growing emphasis on efficiency and innovation is potentially both an opportunity and a threat to open society interests. For all the promise of improved service delivery or public sector responsiveness, these innovations and efficiency reforms can also exacerbate inequality and undermine personal integrity for marginalized communities, whether due to the digital divide or untested assumptions regarding their impact. Especially in the face of the push toward innovation, we believe that philanthropy can help strengthen local civic capacity to effectively support or challenge the push for local innovations.

## **C. Place-Based Opportunity and Challenge**

We believe that core civic institutions that are multi-issued, multi-skilled, and flexible in approach – even as they are consistent in their values and persistent and long-term in their orientation – are critical at the local level to further democracy, justice, and equity interests in the rapidly evolving American dynamic described above. The core concept animating this initiative is that the creation of such civic capacity requires an institutional home (even though the exact form can vary widely in form) and that the Open Society Foundations is well-positioned to stimulate such capacity creation given the primacy it places on the civic sector and local knowledge. We seek to respond to the “new normal” at the local level by creating a new form of civic capacity that can lead, catalyze, and help shepherd change in the new environment.

As discussed more fully below, effective entities must be able to engage in the development and/or dissemination of new ideas, conduct policy advocacy, provide implementation support, and engage and expand key constituencies, etc. We are interested in developing such entities, linking them together, and learning from and building on their experience as one element of the foundation for open society in the United States. We envision these entities as capable of influencing a range of key actors, including civic and public leaders, grassroots and community-based entities, business leaders, and other significant actors that seek public policy and institutional change (e.g. unions).

Frequently, the civic sector's effectiveness stems from its ability to influence, engage or combat the public sector and the business sector. Often, the key actor in a given area will be someone outside the specific control or influence of the entity we are proposing to seed. The facility to influence such actors, however, is one we are seeking to develop, recognizing that it will have different forms in different contexts.

#### **D. Structure, Core Issues, and Key Capacities**

In envisioning what the Open Places Initiative intends to create, U.S. Programs is not wed (at least at this point) to a particular structure or institutional setting. One of the several issues we intend to identify through the RFP process is how local places might most productively seed such an institutional home. Ostensibly, this could be done through the expansion of an existing non-profit entity, the creation of a new entity, a collaboration or coalition of key actors, or the sponsorship of an entity at a key institution (e.g. a university or local philanthropy) and/or a public sector liaison. What is expected is that local leadership will be significantly invested in the effort, as reflected by active participation, leadership and governance as well as through supplemental funding.

The specific subject matters and strategies to be pursued by the initiative will be developed by local leadership and through this selection process. This work is intended to reinforce and support OSF's core principles and values. Thus, while a local entity will have considerable flexibility about the priorities it will choose, we expect that its strategies will relate to one or more of the following areas:

- the creation of vibrant and effective institutions that advance democratic practice (e.g. independent media, the restoration of public trust in democratic government) and that challenge the misuse of government power (e.g. overuse or misuse of incarceration);
- the full and active participation of racial and other historically marginalized groups, including in fields essential to civic and economic engagement (e.g. education, immigrant policy) or those where racial and ethnic disparities are particularly glaring (e.g. criminal justice, drug policy);
- innovative local practices that improve the responsiveness and operation of government in a fashion that advances equity and justice concerns, such as by increasing participation, improving inclusive decision-making, or enhancing transparency.

To pursue this vision, an entity should be able to manage and apply several of the following core capacities, which can and should be tailored to local context, including the ability to:

- use and apply data and information;
- convene and engage diverse constituencies;
- reset and manage political dynamics, including the effective use of media and communications;
- understand and support effective program implementation;
- develop and engage local leadership (including, but not limited, to funding partners);
- undertake policy analysis and advocacy, including the ability to unpack, explain and address the systematic causes of disparities and social problems;
- develop strategic roadmaps to reset policy or practice, including the convening of necessary allies (likely or not).

### **E. What We Seek to Achieve**

After consultation with the U.S. Programs Board, we intend to establish indicators by which we will assess the success of the Open Places Initiative. Specifically, we will focus on indicators which relate to the following elements: 1) the *efficacy* of the entities that carry out the Open Places work in each site over three to five years, assessing the strength of their leadership, the sophistication of their strategies and capacity, and their ability to work effectively in different spheres; 2) the *impact* each site has had, looking at the concrete changes in policy and practice that it has helped to bring about in its community; and 3) increased *understanding* within U.S. Programs about how to invest in local change more effectively and link that change to other work, locally and nationally. Within the following categories, we intend to develop benchmarks that we might use to gauge success for each individual site and the overall effort:

#### **Efficacy of the Local Entities that Carry Out the Open Places Initiative**

- *Mobilization of a growing cross-section of local actors* to identify priorities to open society challenges, debate solutions and strategies, and work together to reform specific policies, practices and beliefs that undercut equity and justice in their region.
- *Use of an inclusionary approach* to the solution of complex problems affecting equity, justice and opportunity that values the perspectives of groups that historically or currently have been marginalized and that encourages their leadership.
- *The creation or strengthening of an institutional home dedicated to equity and justice issues in each site that enjoys diverse local leadership and governance and has the ability to use a variety of tools to achieve change, including by reframing open society issues, engaging key public sector and other leaders, and developing powerful collaborative campaigns.* The strength of local leadership is likely to involve the ability to raise supplementary funds locally.

### **Impact Each Site in Its Community**

- *The identification of effective approaches to achieve the targeted change.*
- *The engagement of a broad range of public and private partners in supporting those approaches and taking them to appropriate scale.*
- *Meaningful and measureable change in policy and/or practice in priority areas.*

### **Increased Understanding within US Programs of how to Maximize Investment in Local Sites**

- *Deeper knowledge of the variety of local dynamics and factors that block or advance equity and justice, including the full participation of all residents in the social, economic and political life of the region, and their relationship to state and national policy.*
- *Identification of the dynamics at play between and among key demographic groups and their effect on the full participation of all residents in the social, economic and political life of the region.*
- *Nuanced information about the beliefs about the role and effectiveness of government in order to craft messages and narratives that effectively capture the hearts as well as the minds of residents to support equity and justice for all individuals and value democratic institutions.*
- *The development of new approaches to addressing persistent challenges that take advantage of innovation and inclusion at the local level.*
- *The ability to connect those efforts to other local, state and national progressive reform efforts, including*
- *U.S. Programs' own work.*
- *Strengthened capacity of local groups to partner with and reinforce the local and state advocacy of national organizations, including by helping national organizations to design and target their work for greater impact at the local and state level.*
- *Linkage of public will, pragmatic solutions, and advocacy capacity at the local level to national reform initiatives.*

## Open Places Initiative RFP Invitees

### Albuquerque, New Mexico

- 1) Southwest Organizing Project
- 2) Center for Law and Poverty
- 3) NM Voices for Children
- 4) OLE
- 5) Native American Voters Alliance

### Atlanta, Georgia

- 1) Georgia Stand-Up
- 2) Project South
- 3) Partnership for Southern Equity
- 4) Georgia Justice Project –
- 5) Southern Education Foundation

### Buffalo, New York

- 1) Coalition for Economic Justice
- 2) Voice Buffalo
- 3) Push Buffalo
- 4) Partnership for the Public Good

### Durham, North Carolina

- 1) Southern Coalition for Social Justice
- 2) North Carolina Central University's Institute for Civic Engagement
- 3) NC Justice Center
- 4) MDC
- 5) Latino Community Development Center

### Denver, Colorado

- 1) CO Immigrant Rights Coalition
- 2) CO Civic Engagement Roundtable
- 3) El Centro Humanitario
- 4) Together Colorado
- 5) Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition

### Hartford, Connecticut

- 1) CT Association of Human Services
- 2) Center for Children's Advocacy
- 3) CT Juvenile Justice Alliance
- 4) CT Voices for Children (SFAI)
- 5) HART

### Jackson, Mississippi

- 1) MS Workers Center
- 2) One Voice
- 3) MS Economic Policy Center
- 4) MS Center for Justice
- 5) Southern Echo

### Las Vegas, Nevada

- 1) PLAN
- 2) Progress Now Nevada
- 3) Mi Familia Vota
- 4) We Are Nevada

### Louisville, Kentucky

- 1) Kentuckians for the Commonwealth
- 2) ACLU
- 3) Network Center for Community Change
- 4) KY Center for Economic Policy
- 5) Fairness Campaign

### Milwaukee, Wisconsin

- 1) WI Citizen Action
- 2) State Voices
- 3) 9to5 National Association of Working Women
- 4) Voces del la Frontera
- 5) **Partnership for Working Families**

### Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

- 1) Take Action MN
- 2) Organizing Apprentice Project
- 3) MN United for a Fair Economy
- 4) Neighborhoods Organizing for Change
- 5) Immigrant Law Center of MN (ILCM)

### New Orleans, Louisiana

- 1) Juvenile Justice Project of LA
- 2) New Orleans Workers Center for Racial Justice
- 3) New Orleans Coalition on Open Governance
- 4) One Voice
- 5) The Public Law Center at Tulane University School of Law

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

- 1) Urban Affairs Coalition
- 2) Action United
- 3) Public Citizens for Children and Youth
- 4) Juvenile Law Center

San Antonio, Texas

- 1) La Fe Policy Research & Education Center
- 2) The Southwest Worker's Union
- 3) The Texas Organizing Project
- 4) Texas Criminal Justice Coalition
- 5) Center for Public Policy Priorities

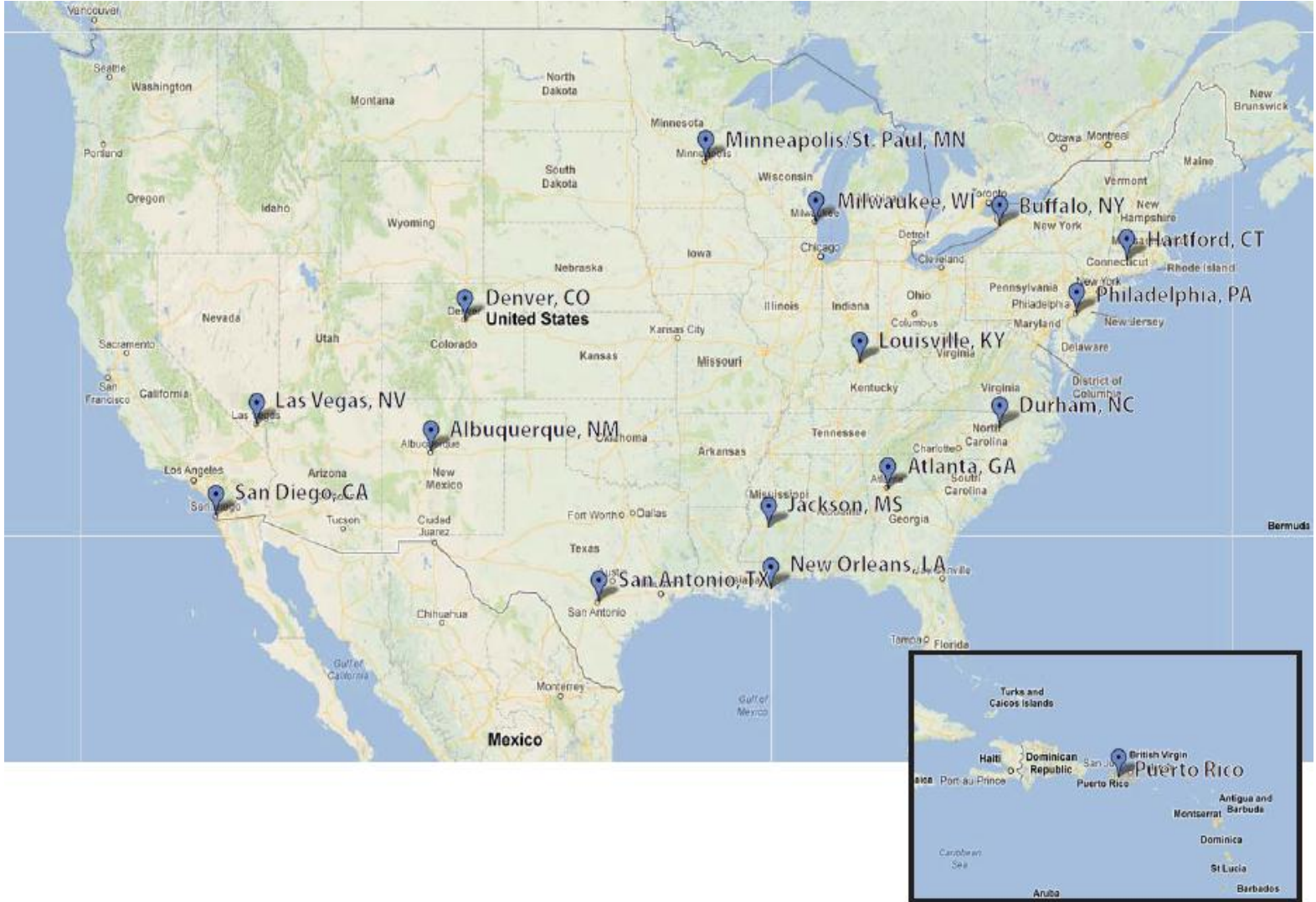
San Diego, California

- 1) Equality Alliance
- 2) Center for Social Advocacy
- 3) San Diego Organizing Project
- 4) Center for Policy Initiatives
- 5) Christie's Place

Puerto Rico

- 1) Center for New Economy – Michael Soto

## Open Places Initiative (OPI) • U.S. Map of Target Sites





# Open Places Initiative (OPI)

## *The Open Places Initiative Planning Grant*

### Call for Proposals

**Proposal Deadline: February 28, 2013**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE** – February 7, 2013 Bidders’ Conference call from 2:00-3:30pm EST  
at (866) 847-5821; access code: 099648#

#### OVERVIEW

Consistent with the long-standing interest of the Open Society Foundations<sup>2</sup> (OSF) in promoting a just, inclusive society that advances equal opportunity and promotes democratic institutions, U.S. Programs is launching a new place-based initiative. The *Open Places Initiative* will make long-term investments in a select number of sites to create or enhance locally based institutions and initiatives committed to advancing justice and equity objectives by developing sophisticated civic capacity. The initiative expects sites to achieve meaningful change at the local level, using multiple strategies and tools and building on local leadership and assets.

The *Open Places Initiative’s* Call for Proposals is a two-phase process. The first phase is an invitation-only proposal competition among 16 local places (cities, regions, territories) for approximately eight planning grants. OSF will award planning grants of up to \$100K to approximately eight semi-finalists in early 2013. In the second phase, semi-finalists will submit their plans for final consideration, resulting in OSF awarding three to five finalists multi-year grants of up to \$1 million dollars each year (for a minimum of three years) for efforts that will change policies and practices at the local level to advance open society priorities. These priorities may include increased equity and racial justice, strengthened democracy, and the advancement of justice.

Through this Request for Proposals, the Open Society Foundations is soliciting one proposal from each of the following 16 places: Albuquerque, New Mexico; Atlanta, Georgia; Buffalo, New York; Durham, North Carolina; Denver, Colorado; Hartford, Connecticut; Jackson, Mississippi; Las Vegas, Nevada; Louisville, Kentucky; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota; New Orleans, Louisiana; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; San Antonio, Texas; San Diego, California and Puerto Rico. In each place, we have identified four to five organizations that we are inviting to work together to conceptualize and design a multi-issue, multi-faceted initiative that—through policy, procedural, administrative, judicial or cultural reform—secures greater justice and opportunity for local populations.

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<sup>2</sup> The Open Society Foundations (OSF) is a 501c3 private operating foundation. The Open Society Foundations are prohibited by United States law from funding any electioneering, including the support for or, opposition to, political candidates or parties in the United States or abroad, and from the earmarking of grant funds for lobbying activities.

## INITIATIVE BACKGROUND

The Open Society Foundations believes that its core principles and its commitment to democracy, justice, and equity require national investments and strategies, given the fundamental role of the federal government in policy and resource allocation. We have long been committed to issues related to criminal justice reform, the full participation of racial and ethnic minorities in civic and economic life, and robust democratic institutions such as an independent media and judiciary. We expect to continue to invest in key civic institutions whose work promotes our values related to an open society, to make strategic investments in national as well as state and local organizations in fields of interest, and to advance issue-specific, frequently time-limited strategies that cover both national and local engagements.

The *Open Places Initiative* reflects an additional strategic approach. In essence, *Open Places* posits that, to promote, protect, and fully understand open society values in the United States and advance specific policy objectives of the Open Society Foundations, it is necessary to build and support locally-grounded institutions capable of using multiple strategies and tools. In doing so, the Open Society Foundations is drawing upon lessons learned from our Baltimore experience as well as other place-based justice initiatives by the public and philanthropic sectors. We believe that key decisions about core open society issues are increasingly made at the local level. Specifically, fundamental shifts in intergovernmental relations, large-scale demographic changes, broad economic shifts, and the experience of innovation by local governments—for both good and bad—heighten the need for justice-oriented civic capacity at the local/regional level.

The orientation of the *Open Places Initiative* reflects the Open Society Foundations' recognition of the importance of local leadership and knowledge in addressing core equity and justice concerns and belief that more sophisticated civic capacity is critical, given the new potential and challenges that will arise at the local level in the coming years. To ensure that local efforts inform and benefit from relevant national advocacy efforts and provide lessons for replication in other states, the *Open Places Initiative* will provide opportunities for participating sites to critique their work with each other, link with key regional and national actors, and publicize promising approaches.

*Open Places Initiative* planning grants will allow successful applicants to develop cogent, comprehensive solutions to key open society challenges. Each plan, when developed, will be expected to address the following:

1. **Institutional Home:** The core concept animating the *Open Places Initiative* is that the creation of the civic capacity described above requires an institutional home to respond to the “new normal” at the local level. One of the several issues we intend to explore through the planning process is how local places might most productively seed such an institutional home that is multi-issued, multi-skilled, and flexible in approach even as it is consistent in its values and long-term in its orientation. While this is most likely to be accomplished through the creation of a new entity, it could also be achieved through the expansion of an existing non-profit organization, a collaborative or coalition of key actors, or an entity that is housed or sponsored at a key institution (e.g., a university or local philanthropy) or has a public sector sponsor or liaison.

2. **Program Objectives and Strategies:** Through the planning process, each site will identify and develop the specific subject matters and strategies it will pursue. While local leadership will have considerable flexibility as to the objectives it will choose, OSF expects that they will relate to and produce measureable results in one or more of U.S. Programs' priority areas:
  - the creation of vibrant and effective institutions that advance democratic practice (e.g., independent media, the restoration of public trust in democratic government) and that challenge the misuse of government power (e.g., overuse or misuse of incarceration);
  - the full and active participation of racial and other historically marginalized groups, including in fields essential to civic and economic engagement (e.g., education, immigration policy) or those where racial and ethnic disparities are particularly glaring (e.g., criminal justice, drug policy);
  - innovative local practices that improve the responsiveness and operation of government in a fashion that advances equity and justice concerns, such as by increasing participation, improving inclusive decision-making, or enhancing transparency.
  
3. **Core Capacities:** Effective plans must demonstrate the ability to engage in the development and/or dissemination of new ideas, policy advocacy, implementation support, and engagement and expansion of key constituencies. Specifically, the lead entity will be able to manage and employ several of the following core capacities, tailored to local context: a) using data and information; b) convening and engaging diverse constituencies; c) resetting and managing political dynamics, including the effective use of the press and strategic communication; d) understanding and supporting effective program implementation; e) developing and engaging local leadership, including, but not limited to, philanthropic leadership; f) undertaking policy analysis and advocacy, including the ability to unpack and explain the systematic causes of disparities and social problems; and g) developing strategic roadmaps to reset policy or practice.

The purpose of the planning grant will be to provide resources to enable approximately eight places in the U.S. to engage in a comprehensive planning process, grounded in local wisdom and led by local experts, and identify ambitious but attainable justice and equity objectives as well as develop the core civic capacities and strategies needed to advance and achieve these objectives.

## **PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

The Open Society Foundations will accept *one* application from each site. Included in the cover letter invitation is a list of other invitees from each site. We have shared that information with the expectation that all invitees will be in communication with each other within their respective sites to determine whether and how they would like to collaborate to respond to the Request for Proposals. Each site's application should identify a strong effort that would exceed the ability of any of the individual organizations participating in the planning process. Each group may engage additional partners that were not part of the original invitation to join in the development of its application.

Each application must designate and be submitted by a lead organization that would manage the planning grant funds, if awarded. (*Note:* Sites that receive planning grants may identify a different organization to serve as the lead during the implementation phase.)

Lead organizations are *required* to:

- Show proof of Internal Revenue Service Code 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Other partnering individuals and organizations collaborating on the submission of the application need not be tax-exempt.

Each application should identify a geographical area (the city proper or an area that extends beyond the city's boundaries) that it seeks to affect, with the understanding that the site may occasionally employ state policy strategies to have impact in the targeted geographical area. *Open Places Initiative* is not a statewide or neighborhood initiative; nevertheless, to achieve policy change or to demonstrate good practices, sites may occasionally focus their strategies in these venues.

### **Proposal Format**

Proposals should be a *maximum* of 13 double-spaced pages (exclusive of Appendix material) with 12 point type and 1" margins. Proposals must include the following content, with suggested page limits, as outlined below:

1. Describe the open society challenges or opportunities in your jurisdiction and the vision you have for change. (2 pages)
2. Describe the cultural, demographic, economic and political landscape that affects this geography. (1.5 pages)
3. Define the geographic focus of this initiative; provide a rationale for the geography selected and describe work outside of this focus that may be needed to bring about change. (1 page)
4. Describe the Applicant (lead organization for the planning phase); identify and describe the role and responsibilities of any new entity as well as those of key partners and stakeholders that are needed to develop an authentic and actionable plan and, if selected, to carry the initiative to success. (2 pages)
5. Describe the process you will employ for: a) the formation, collaborative development, or selection of the *Open Places* institutional home; b) a detailed assessment of your jurisdiction's strengths, challenges and opportunities; c) the identification of substantive priorities, objectives and strategies; and, d) the identification/engagement of partners that, working in concert, will be effective in achieving your objectives. (2 pages)
6. Describe how this initiative will build local civic capacity; include an assessment of what capacities currently exist and what new capacities would need to be built or strengthened. (1 page)
7. Describe the indicators you will use to assess progress. (0.5 page)
8. Discuss the communication activities you plan to employ in carrying out your strategies and your capacity for doing so. (1 page)

9. Identify staff (or potential staff positions) for the planning process and their roles and responsibilities; include any contributed or allocated staff from partner organizations (1 page)
10. Describe how you will use the planning grant dollars; discuss functions and activity, *not* line items. (1 page)

#### Appendices:

- A. Letters of specific support and contribution. Note: Do not include general endorsement letters, only letters that offer specific roles and/or contributions from stakeholders.
- B. Budget. Develop a traditional budget and accompanying budget narrative, including personnel, fringe, office operations, contracted and consulting services, etc. Be sure to provide detailed information on the roles, tasks, products and rates of consultants and contracted items.
- C. Staffing plan. Provide names, titles, planning roles/job descriptions and resumes for all proposed staff.

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

The Open Society Foundations will assess applications for planning grants on the following criteria:

- How strong is the lead agency? Does the applicant have the credibility, experience and capacity to convene, organize and develop an effective plan in partnership with other critical stakeholders in the jurisdiction?
- Are the right partners involved in significant roles? Do partnerships exist with key stakeholders— e.g., non-profits, public agencies, philanthropies, and the business sector—that can help to expand the capacity and impact of the proposed work?
- Is there potential to advance core open society issues (e.g., criminal justice, racial justice, immigration, access to information, civic engagement, and government transparency)?
- What are the likelihood of having a measurable impact and the potential for replication?
- Is there capacity to use communications effectively to support and bring about change?
- Is there a vigorous advocacy infrastructure that currently exists or is under development that will mobilize stakeholders to embrace the desired changes?
- Are there early indications of interest from local philanthropy, the business sector, non-profits and the government in contributing resources to support and sustain the *Open Places* site?

### **How to Apply**

Proposals must be submitted via e-mail with five hard copies submitted by regular mail to (OpenPlaces@opensocietyfoundations.org). Proposals **must be submitted (and hard copies post-marked) by February 28, 2013.**

### **Reporting Requirements**

Applicants that receive planning grants are expected to meet Open Society Foundations' requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports on the use of funds. At the close of the planning grant, the lead organization will provide a written three-year implementation plan and a budget for the first year.

### **Use of Planning Grant Funds**

Planning grant funds will support the cost of convening partners, consultant fees and project staff salaries, data gathering and analysis, collaborative learning, communications, supplies, initiative-related travel, and design.

### **Technical Assistance**

The Open Society Foundations staff will provide technical assistance to participating sites to: help with organizational development and substantive issues, including through convening meetings with experts on community change and metropolitan dynamics; link sites with each other and to relevant advocates and public and non-profit resources and leaders; and integrate communications strategically to enhance the effectiveness of the site's work, to publicize lessons learned, and to encourage replication and expansion of promising approaches.

## **SUMMARY OF PROCESS**

### **Key Dates and Deadlines**

- February 7, 2013 — Bidders' conference call
- February 28, 2013 — Deadline for postmark of planning grant proposals and e-mail submission
- April 2013 — Notification of semi-finalists
- September 6, 2013 — Deadline for postmark of implementation grant proposals and e-mail submission
- October 2013 — Site visits with semi-finalists
- November 2013— Implementation finalists announced
- January 1, 2014 — Implementation grant start date

### **Planning Grants** (awarded to approximately eight applicants)

The *Open Places Initiative's* Call for Proposals is a two-phase process. The first phase is an invitation-only proposal competition among 16 places for approximately eight planning grants (of up to \$100,000). The Open Society Foundations will award planning grant award to semi-finalists in early 2013.

**Planning Grants Bidders' Conference Call**

All applicants are invited to participate in the *Open Places Initiative* Bidders' Conference call on February 7<sup>th</sup> from 2:00pm – 3:30pm EST. [(866) 847-5821; access code: 099648#]. The conference call will provide an opportunity for Open Society Foundations staff to provide an overview of the *Open Places Initiative* and respond to questions. Before and after the Bidders' Conference, applicants may submit questions to Open Society Foundations staff through [OpenPlaces@opensocietyfoundations.org](mailto:OpenPlaces@opensocietyfoundations.org). Staff will distribute responses to all participating organizations and, after the Bidders' Conference, issue a comprehensive FAQ.

**Implementation Grants** (awarded to three to five applicants)

Semi-finalists will submit their plans for a final competition in which Open Society Foundations will award three to five finalists multi-year support (for a minimum three years) of up to \$1 million dollars each year for efforts that will change policies, practices or culture at the local level to advance open society priorities. These initiatives may seek to increase equity and racial justice, strengthen democracy, and advance justice. *Open Places Initiative* will provide technical assistance to all granted sites as well as support cooperative learning and exchanges among sites.