

Technical Assistance & Regrant Initiative to Strengthen Field and Grantee Capacity US Programs and Nonprofit Finance Fund

Summarized history of the initiative

The **Technical Assistance Initiative (TAI) to Strengthen Field and Grantee Capacity** was an 18-month long initiative to build the financial health of 41 USP grantees. This initiative was developed at the urging of the USP board and in response to the changed economic environment that grantees were facing.

All relevant documents related to TAI have been saved in USP Central.

Goal of TAI

To support and strengthen grantees in fields that are core to USP's mission, by providing them with financial knowledge and tools that they can apply to 1) manage their organizations in a more sustainable way; 2) respond to current and future challenges more creatively and effectively, and 3) handle risk, direct resources and pursue opportunities.

Two USP units were charged with leading the initiative: Grantmaking Operations (GO) and the Strategic Opportunities Fund (SOF).

For documentation purposes, below we have summarized how the TAI was conceived and executed.

August 2009: Grantmaking Operations surveyed USP staff to uncover impact of economic downturn on grantees. The survey asked the following questions:

- *What are the biggest or unique challenges USP grantees are facing?*
- *Are grantees proactively coming to you to discuss challenges?*
- *Are you reaching out to grantees to discuss challenges?*
- *Are you discussing these challenges with other funders with whom you have grantees in common?*
- *Are your grantees making extra or special requests from you?*
- *What strategies are your grantees implementing to address the effects of the economic downturn?*
- *What would help your grantees address the effects of the economic downturn?*
- *What special or extra support are you providing?*
- *What would help you to best respond to the needs of your grantees?*

Results from the survey are saved in USP Central, in Karl: <https://karl.soros.org/communities/u.s.-programs-central/files/technical-assistance-initiative-tai-2010-2012/usp-survey-analysis-final.pdf/dl/USP+Survey+Analysis+final.pdf>

August 2009: Grantmaking Operations conducted research on grantmaking and other strategies employed by funders to respond to the economic crisis. The resulting document can be found in: <https://karl.soros.org/communities/u.s.-programs-central/files/technical-assistance-initiative-tai-2010-2012/funder-s-strategies-to-strengthen-grantee-capacity.pdf/dl/Funder%27s+strategies+to+strengthen+grantee+capacity.pdf>

September 2009: Grantmaking Operations and the Strategic Opportunities Fund led discussion at a USP staff meeting. The agenda included:

- Overview of impact of the economic downturn on the nonprofit sector nationwide
- Sharing results from staff survey

- Summary of how USP had responded so far to the economic crisis
- Discussion of four possible models for implementing the TAI

Background document can be found: <https://karl.soros.org/communities/u.s.-programs-central/files/technical-assistance-initiative-tai-2010-2012/analysis-and-action-proposal-document-8.pdf/dl/Analysis+and+action+proposal+document+%288%29.pdf>

September 2009 to February 2010: based on input from staff and senior management, GO and SOF created a *proposal for action* that went through a number of iterations until it reached completion in February 2010.

March 2010: seven consulting firms were identified and sent a Request for Proposals (RFP).

Firms identified can be found in: <https://karl.soros.org/communities/u.s.-programs-central/files/technical-assistance-initiative-tai-2010-2012/suggested-ta-providers-for-rfp.pdf/dl/Suggested+TA+providers+for+RFP.pdf>

Request for Proposals: <https://karl.soros.org/communities/u.s.-programs-central/files/technical-assistance-initiative-tai-2010-2012/rfp-usp-technical-assistance-initiative-2010.pdf/dl/RFP+-+USP+Technical+Assistance+Initiative+2010.pdf>

March 29, 2010: SOF and GO conducted a conference call with the seven consulting firms identified, where we answered questions from the firms and listened to recommendation on how to implement the TAI.

April 2010: Five consulting firms sent proposals, and those were reviewed between April 15 and April 30. In order to review and rank the proposals, SFO and GO developed and used a scoring sheet: <https://karl.soros.org/communities/u.s.-programs-central/files/technical-assistance-initiative-tai-2010-2012/tai-reader-scoring-sheet.pdf/dl/TAI+Reader+Scoring+Sheet.pdf>

May 2010: three firms were selected for interviews (Nonprofit Finance Fund, TCC Group, and FMA-CRE), and these were conducted the week of May 3rd.

June 2010: NFF was selected as the provider for the TAI.

June to October 2010: NFF and SOF/GO worked together to refine the proposal and budget. The TAI ended up consisting of two interrelated pieces:

- Financial capacity building and sustainability planning services to a selected group of 41 USP grantees (Contract approved in December for U\$500,000; amended in June 2011 to add U\$11,500 to cover 2 training sessions for USP staff in NY and Baltimore)
- General support grants to the 41 selected grantees to offset some of the costs of participating in the initiative; and high-touch consulting for 10 grantees (Grant approved on 12/10/2010 for U\$1.3 million)

Final version of the technical assistance piece can be found in [Contract Online](#).

Final version of the general support application can be found in [Grant Tracker](#).

The TAI was implemented between January 2011 and April 2012.

A list of the 41 USP grantees that were selected to participate in the TAI can be found in: <https://karl.soros.org/communities/u.s.-programs-central/files/technical-assistance-initiative-tai-2010->

[2012/usp-grantees-that-participated-in-the-technical-assistance-initiative.pdf/dl/USP+grantees+that+participated+in+the+Technical+Assistance+Initiative.pdf](https://karl.soros.org/communities/u.s.-programs-central/files/technical-assistance-initiative-tai-2010-2012/nff-presentation.pdf/dl/USP+grantees+that+participated+in+the+Technical+Assistance+Initiative.pdf)

June 2011: NFF delivered two training workshops for USP New York and Baltimore staff. Presentation can be found in: <https://karl.soros.org/communities/u.s.-programs-central/files/technical-assistance-initiative-tai-2010-2012/nff-presentation.pdf/dl/NFF+presentation.pdf>

Final narrative and financial reports can be found in Grant Tracker, grant ID 20030755. The narrative report can also be found in: <https://karl.soros.org/communities/u.s.-programs-central/files/technical-assistance-initiative-tai-2010-2012/final-narrative-report-nff.pdf/dl/Final+narrative+report+NFF.pdf>

April 2012: NFF delivered a “Lessons Learned” session for USP staff. Presentation can be found in: <https://karl.soros.org/communities/u.s.-programs-central/files/technical-assistance-initiative-tai-2010-2012/osi-report-presentation-4-17-2012-final.pdf/dl/OSI+Report+Presentation+4-17-2012+FINAL.pdf>