

The Transparency Fund
Planned Grants for Docket III
August 20, 2012

The Transparency Fund supports groups working to promote: 1) broad access to information, 2) high-quality accountability journalism on critical open society issues, 3) an impartial and diverse judiciary, and 4) broad and equitable access to the ballot. This Fund includes a portfolio of 65 grantees with a grantmaking budget of \$14.5 million in 2012. On this docket, we will present 17 grants for approval, totaling \$5,230,000. In some cases, grant terms and amounts have not been finalized.

I. Broad Access to Information

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington

General Support, \$300,000 over two years (renewal)

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) is an aggressive watchdog group dedicated to ensuring the integrity of public officials and the federal government. Using a combination of research, litigation, and strategic communications, CREW investigates and exposes government officials who violate ethics rules and laws, and thus undermine public trust in government. CREW also focuses specifically on issues of money in politics, aiming to address the lack of transparency in the campaign finance system by advocating for disclosure of political spending, and exposing such spending in the absence of such reforms. This grant would advance the Transparency Fund's interest in addressing the undue influence of money on the American political process.

MapLight.org

General Support, \$500,000 over two years (renewal)

MAPLight.org (MapLight) is a nonpartisan political money tracker that combines information about lawmakers, votes, and interest groups to reveal money's influence on politics on an accessible online platform. MapLight pioneered the practice of connecting campaign contribution data with legislative votes in a single database. Combining this data makes visible key information such as contributions given by the special interest groups supporting and opposing each bill; average donations given to legislators voting yes and no on each bill; and, a timeline of contributions and votes for each bill, graphically identifying when legislators received large donations before or after their votes. MapLight's work covers U.S. Congress, the California Legislature, the Wisconsin Legislature, and the City of Los Angeles. This grant would advance the Transparency Fund's goal of supporting the use of data and technology to increase the transparency and accountability of government, and would also advance the Fund's interest in addressing the undue influence of money on the American political process.

New America Foundation Open Technology Institute

Project Support, \$500,000 over one year (renewal)

The New America Foundation is a nonpartisan public policy institute that invests in new

thinkers and new ideas to address the next generation of challenges in the United States. This grant would support New America's Open Technology Institute and Media Policy Fellowship Program. The Open Technology Institute conducts research and analysis on the social and economic impacts of communication technology and develops policy proposals aimed at achieving universal and affordable broadband access and widespread adoption of technology, particularly in low income, rural, and other underserved communities. The Initiative includes a Media Policy Fellowship program, which brings together fellows with expertise in public media, independent journalism, municipal broadband, intellectual property, privacy policy, open-source software development, economics, and telecommunications policy. This grant would advance the Transparency Fund's goal of supporting information policy that ensures an open, democratic communications infrastructure for speech, information, and knowledge exchange.

II. Journalism for an Open Society

Chicago Reporter (Community Renewal Society)

Project Support, \$300,000 over two years (renewal)

The Chicago Reporter is an investigative news organization that reports on the social, economic, and political issues of metropolitan Chicago with a distinctive focus on race and poverty.

Founded in 1972, the *Reporter* now serves a wide, diverse and influential audience of policymakers and government officials, traditional and new media, social service providers, public policy experts and members of the general public interested in racial and economic equality. The *Reporter's* core areas of coverage are criminal justice, affordable housing, public health, government and politics, labor and employment, and immigration. The *Reporter* also hosts a weekly radio show and sponsors community forums. The *Reporter's* pioneering use of computer assisted reporting has brought to light important Chicago stories hidden in the city's databases.

The *Reporter's* investigation of racially disparate home mortgage lending practices sparked a lawsuit filed by Illinois Attorney General that resulted in an \$8.7 billion settlement in 2008 with Countrywide Financial to modify more than 400,000 home loans nationwide. The *Reporter's* work was cited again in 2011 in a \$335 million settlement involving the U.S. Department of Justice, the Illinois Attorney General, and Countrywide. At issue, Countrywide charged black and Hispanic borrowers higher mortgage fees in the lead up to the financial crisis and steered them into riskier loans than their white counterparts. In 2012, the *Reporter* produced the investigation that resulted in a \$175 million Department of Justice settlement with mortgage lender Wells Fargo over discriminatory lending practices. The *Reporter* currently has a staff of just four reporters. Support for *The Chicago Reporter* advances the Transparency Fund's goal of strengthening accountability journalism on critical open society issues at the state and local level.

Investigative News Network (Center for Public Integrity)

Project Support, \$300,000 over two years (renewal)

The Investigative News Network (INN) is a collaboration of over 30 non-commercial news organizations. INN aims to maximize the quality, audience and sustainability of public interest watchdog journalism on the state and local levels. INN will explore possibilities for collaborative content development (such as state capitol coverage schemes, means of covering and engaging communities, multi-media approaches to reporting, etc.), shared resources (such as legal help, data analysis and research), shared distribution, and revenue/sustainability options -- syndication or advertising networks for example. The ultimate goal of this effort is to build and link together state and regional investigative organizations to create a 50-state network of state and regional centers for investigative and public interest reporting. Support for the Investigative News Network would advance the Transparency Fund's goal of strengthening accountability journalism on critical open society issues. In addition to supporting individual journalism outlets, the Fund has identified the need to support the rapidly evolving noncommercial journalism sector as a whole, to take advantage of opportunities to create shared services or economies of scale.

MIT Center for Civic Media

Project support, \$600,000 over two years

The MIT Center for Civic Media is a joint program of the MIT Media Lab and MIT's Comparative Media Studies program. The Center for Civic Media creates and deploys technical and social tools that fill the information needs of communities. Media Cloud is an open source, open data platform that allows researchers to answer quantitative questions about the content of online media. Using Media Cloud, researchers, journalism critics and interested citizens can examine what media sources cover which stories, what language different media outlets use in conjunction with different stories, and how stories spread from one media outlet to another. Media Cloud can help us understand who sets the agenda for public discourse and political action in the 21st century, and identify the range of issues that can make it onto that agenda. These questions have been difficult to study in the environment of print and broadcast news media, and are far more challenging to study in today's participatory media environment.

Researchers can use the tool to understand the role of professional and participatory media in political movements. Journalists can use the tool to understand the early emergence of news stories and tell richer stories about the origin of new media phenomena. Activists will be able to study the success and failure of campaigns and design new interventions based on increased knowledge. Foundations will be able to generate concrete metrics to understand the impact of their media and advocacy strategies.

Creating and disseminating media is one of the most important forms of political power in the 21st century. Yet the actual mechanisms of media dissemination and influence are poorly understood and badly documented. Media Cloud represents a major step forward in understanding the flow of influence in the digital public sphere. If successful, Media Cloud will become a major resource for anyone trying to use media for social change, and for their financial supporters to understand what works, what fails and why. Support for Media Cloud would advance the Transparency Fund's goal of supporting the rapidly evolving noncommercial

journalism sector as a whole, to take advantage of opportunities to create shared services or economies of scale.

NPR StateImpact

Project support, \$1,000,000 over eighteen months (renewal)

StateImpact is a collaboration among NPR and local public radio stations in eight pilot states to examine public policy issues in-depth. The project seeks to inform and engage communities with broadcast and online news about how state government decisions affect people's lives. StateImpact's focus is explanatory reporting, data-driven journalism and supporting a strong network of reporters, stations and states that collaborate with one another.

The network includes two reporters in each pilot state who explore a single public policy issue and tell stories about the people affected by the government decisions. The goal is to put news in context, providing insight and background rather than just the latest headlines. StateImpact reports will run daily on each state's site and on participating local public radio stations.

Transparency Fund support enabled NPR to launch this pilot. The eight pilot states were chosen for regional diversity and based on member stations' commitment to collaboration and issue-focused coverage within their states. Support for NPR StateImpact would advance the Transparency Fund's goal of strengthening accountability journalism on critical open society issues at the state and local level

III. Broad and Equitable Access to Ballot

Demos

Project Support, \$150,000 over one year (renewal)

Demos is a New York City-based non-partisan public policy, research, and advocacy organization that combines research, policy development, and advocacy to influence public debates and catalyze change. This grant would provide renewal support to Demos for Public Agency Voter Registration, a project that ensures full implementation of federal law easing the voter registration process for low-income individuals. The Public Agency Voter Registration project advances the Transparency Fund's goal of ensuring broad access to the ballot, especially for historically disfranchised constituencies. This grant would advance the Transparency Fund's goal of broadening access to the ballot for underrepresented and marginalized constituencies.

Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Project Support, \$200,000 over one years (renewal)

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law (LCCRUL) was formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to involve the private bar in providing legal services to address racial discrimination. Its principal mission is to secure equal justice, through the rule of law, for all Americans. Lawyers' Committee co-counsels with law firms and corporate legal departments on all its work. This grant would allow the Lawyers' Committee on Civil Rights to respond to suppressive voting policies and promote innovative and proactive legal strategies to expand access to the ballot, including Election Day Registration and voter registration modernization.

This grant would advance the Transparency Fund's goals of protecting citizens from unreasonable restrictions on the right to vote and of broadening access to the ballot for underrepresented and marginalized constituencies.

IV. Fair, Impartial and Diverse Courts

Center for Political Accountability

Project Support, \$130,000 over one year (renewal)

The Center for Political Accountability or CPA is a non-partisan organization that seeks to bring transparency and accountability to the political contribution policies and practices of U.S. companies. CPA works with corporate leaders, institutional shareholders, and business ethics organizations to establish best practices for corporate political spending and then persuade corporations to adopt those standards. Thus far, CPA has persuaded over half the S&P 100 to adopt transparency policies. CPA created an index to rate companies on their political disclosure and accountability policies and practices that it is now using to persuade poorly-ranked corporations to improve their practices. This grant would advance the Transparency Fund's (the Fund) goal of reducing the influence of money in politics. It would also advance the Fund's goal of providing funding to core judicial independence organizations.

Committee for Economic Development

Project Support, \$150,000 over one year (renewal)

The Committee for Economic Development (CED) is an independent, nonpartisan organization of business and university leaders dedicated to policy research and advocacy on major economic and social issues. CED has provided a business voice for campaign finance and judicial selection reforms for over fifteen years. In 2013, CED proposes to take the issues of public funding, transparency, and judicial independence and continue to build business support for reforms. Through these efforts, CED will promote the development and implementation of policies and advance proposals that improve the health of our democracy. The grant would advance the Transparency Fund's goal of reducing the influence of money in politics. It would also advance the Fund's goal of providing funding to core judicial independence organizations.

Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Project Support, \$150,000 over one year (renewal)

The Lawyers' Committee is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to engage the private bar in providing legal services to address racial discrimination. Its mission is to secure, through the rule of law, equal justice for all Americans. Guided by the Justice at Stake strategic plan, the Lawyers' Committee is helping lead the Judicial Diversity Initiative with the goal of building the capacity and increasing the number of prospective minority judges by facilitating mentor relationships with current minority judges. The Initiative is well underway in the state of Washington, where the first class of prospective judges is entering its second year. In 2013, the Lawyers' Committee plans to expand the Judicial Diversity Initiative into two additional states and to increase national

presence on the importance of diversity on the bench. Work has already begun in North Carolina, which, like Washington, is a state where judges are elected. The grant would advance the Transparency Fund's goal of supporting efforts to diversify the judiciary.

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund

Project Support, \$125,000 over one year (renewal)

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (Lambda Legal) is one of the oldest and largest legal organizations in the LGBTQ civil rights movement. It engages in impact litigation to expand the rights of LGBTQ and HIV positive individuals and employs targeted educational initiatives and public policy reforms to complement and magnify its work in the courtroom. Since its inception in 2005, the Fair Courts Project has cultivated key partnerships with national and state-based organizations, strengthening the collaborative effort to preserve and promote a fair and impartial system of justice for all. In the coming year, the Fair Courts Project will work closely with Justice at Stake to respond to these attacks on the judiciary by bringing Lambda Legal's unique voice, expertise and influence to the national call for judicial independence. In addition, the project will devote resources to the continued development of long-term and strategic messaging. The grant would advance the Transparency Fund's strategic goal of ensuring fair, impartial, and diverse courts by supporting core judicial independence organizations collaborating in the Justice at Stake campaign.

Life of the Law (International Media Project)

Project Support, \$100,000 over one year (renewal)

The International Media Project (d/b/a National Radio Project) is an independent non-profit organization. It produces investigative journalism and in-depth critical analysis, disseminates educational materials, and promotes civic participation. International Media Project serves as fiscal sponsor for a planning grant to develop Life of the Law, a new radio and multi-media project that examines, analyzes, and explores the role and functioning of law and the legal system in American society. Combining investigative journalism, interviews, explanatory pieces with issue experts, and narrative storytelling, Life of the Law aims to debunk widespread misconceptions about law and the legal system, misconceptions that impede efforts at legal reform. This grant would advance the Transparency Fund's goal of assuring fair, impartial, and diverse courts by developing and disseminating new ideas and understandings of law, the Constitution, and the courts.

National Center for State Courts

Project Support, \$100,000 over one year

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) is a non-partisan, non-profit organization created in 1971 by Chief Justice Warren Burger to improve the administration of justice in the state courts. In response to U.S. Programs Board interest in judicial professionalism, we have commissioned NCSC to research and produce a report on relevant topics. NCSC will conduct a national survey among a random sample of state trial court judges to better understand attitudes and practices related to judicial professionalism including: the current nature of judges' work styles, morale, sense of community, and attitudes and how these factors influence

the character of their work. While the initial survey will focus on state court judges, NCSC may collaborate with the Federal Judicial Center to include federal judges in the survey. This grant represents an initial exploration into work on judicial professionalism and the role of courts in American democracy.

Proteus Fund, Inc.

Project Support, \$500,000 over one year (renewal)

The Proteus Fund is a foundation dedicated to supporting advocacy on issues of justice, democracy, human rights, and peace. Proteus houses the Piper Fund, a donor collaborative that combines research, evaluation, technical assistance, and grant making to support efforts that decrease the influence of money in our democracy. The proposed grant would provide support for Piper’s Judicial Independence initiative. The Judicial Independence initiative provides a vehicle through which donors may identify, support, and evaluate state-level reform efforts to reduce the corrupting influence of money in the judiciary. Working with Piper increases OSF’s capacity to move funding to state-level campaigns for judicial reform while also supporting collaborative efforts by judicial independence groups (such as the Fair Courts Litigation Committee). This grant would support the Transparency Fund’s goal of ensuring courts at the state and federal levels remain fair and impartial. It would also advance the Transparency Fund’s goal of reducing the influence of money and politics through close collaboration with others engaged in related work, including funders.

National Congress of American Indians Fund

Project Support, \$125,000 over one year (renewal)

The National Congress of American Indians Fund (NCAIF) is the 501(c)(3) arm of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). Founded in 1944, NCAI is the oldest and largest American Indian, Hawaiian Native, and Alaska Native membership organization, serving a diverse network of over 250 tribes representing more than three quarters of the national population of indigenous Americans. Renewal support would allow NCAIF to continue its work on the federal judiciary and federal nominations, including: mentoring Native American attorneys interested in federal court judgeships; meeting with circuit court judges to raise awareness and understanding of Indian law and culture, and; working with local tribes to develop connections to Senators. This funding will also support ongoing efforts to build active Native American constituencies for judicial nominations advocacy. The grant would advance the Transparency Fund’s goal of supporting efforts to diversify the judiciary and support the development of effective models for grassroots education and organizing related to federal judicial nominations.

V. Out of Docket Grants:

Berkman Center for Internet and Society

Project support, \$25,000 to \$50,000 over six months

This grant will support a convening of 30 local government innovation leaders in November 2012 at Harvard University.

Alliance for Justice

General Support, \$50,000 over one year

The Alliance for Justice (the Alliance) is a national association of over seventy environmental, civil rights, mental health, women's, children's and consumer advocacy organizations. The Alliance operates two significant projects: the Advocacy Project and the Justice Project. The Advocacy Project develops resources and implements projects that help build and strengthen nonprofit capacity to engage in public policy work. The Alliance aims to engage and educate two related audiences – nonprofits and foundations – about the need and ability to engage in critical public policy debates within the bounds of IRS 501(c)(3) restrictions on lobbying. On judicial nominations issues, AFJ provides essential research support to groups working to reshape the composition of the federal courts. The grant would advance the Transparency Fund's goal of supporting efforts to diversify the judiciary

Cardozo Law School

General Support, \$50,000 over one year

Cardozo Law School is part of Yeshiva University and named after former Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo. This grant would allow the law school to organize and host a two-day conference on impartiality and judicial decision making in the 21st century. Using Justice Benjamin Cardozo's canonical *Nature of the Judicial Process* – a 1921 book that remains the standard text on how judges approach their work – the conference would bring together judges, law professors, lawyers, social scientists, and neuroscientists to update Cardozo's work for a new century, using changes in understandings of the role of the courts, developments in social and biological sciences that have reshaped our understanding of human reasoning, and the evolution of thinking about impartiality in a nation even more diverse than the America in which Cardozo worked. This grant represents an initial exploration into work on judicial professionalism and the role of courts in American democracy.

Center for American Progress

Project Support, \$50,000 over nine months

The Center for American Progress (CAP) is a think tank that develops, analyzes, and disseminates policy ideas while engaging in debates on key issues in American politics and society. This grant would allow Legal Progress (CAP's legal policy program) to coordinate a two-day summit of grassroots advocates from around the country who are advocating for a more diverse (in terms of background and ideology) federal judiciary. CAP will work in collaboration with two other OSF grantees in this area: the Infinity Project and the National Council of Jewish Women. Attendees at the meeting will share strategies for building engagement on judicial nominations, receive training on messaging and coalition building, hear from national experts on the forecast for nominations in the next administration, and begin building a national network of state-based nominations advocates. The grant would advance the Transparency Fund's goal of developing effective models for grassroots education and organizing related to federal judicial nominations.