



OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

**Request for Proposals:
Increasing Organizational Sustainability through Expansion of Small Donor and/or
Membership Base**

The Open Society Institute and the New World Foundation are issuing a joint request for proposals with the goal of making grants to community-based organizations with a proven track record in raising revenue from a small donor base, that raises scope and scale of their work, at the same time expanding their base to build organizational power. The RFP will be targeted to identify best practices and prioritize new strategies in a way that is responsive and amplifies the impact of small donor development and membership base building in the field.

This RFP comes at a moment in which developing new sources of revenue is critical to ongoing sustainability of community-based social justice work. The social justice community disproportionately relies upon foundations for financial support. This funding model has many problems, particularly creating instability for organizations in times of financial crisis and reorienting accountability away from an organization's membership base. Through this RFP, we hope to enhance and lift up models and ideas that can inform and inspire the field and funders alike. We will be looking for projects focused on small donors and membership strategies that seek to strengthen and engage larger numbers of people.

In 2009, we will seek to fund a small number of organizations with 2-year plans to engage this work. The plan for the second year should factor in expected revenue generated by the project, and will be considered an indicator of how the work will begin to sustain itself beyond the second year. We will consider funding for a broad range of proposed activities that seek to build enhanced small donor bases, including staffing and/ or specific donor outreach projects. We will not provide funding for planning processes; our priority is on implementation of efforts that could become replicable models that benefit the broader social justice ecosystem.

Eligibility

We seek to fund a mix of approaches to this work, with an emphasis on grassroots base-building organizations with a social justice orientation, but will entertain proposals from

networks as well. A priority will also be placed on organizations with a membership base in marginalized communities. Eligible organizations will have some previous experience in this area that they wish to build upon.

Grant levels will be between \$35,000 and \$150,000 for one year. A second year of funding may be awarded based on meeting benchmarks and approval of funding from each foundation's board.

Grantees should include evaluation indicators and their own plans for evaluating and documenting progress. The funding partners will develop opportunities for convening of grantees and sharing and disseminating models, ideas and lessons learned in this process.

Required Proposal Content

The proposal must include a cover letter, proposal narrative, and appendices, as described below. Please submit completed proposals to Marisol Ramos at mramos@newwf.org by **October 30, 2009** with the subject line, "**RFP: Increasing Organizational Sustainability.**"

A. Cover letter

Applicants submitting a grant proposal should submit a cover page on institutional letterhead that includes the following:

- a one-sentence description of the proposed initiative;
- the amount requested;
- the total organizational budget amount;
- the name and website of the organization that would serve as the fiscal sponsor for the grant if awarded; and
- the name, address, e-mail and telephone number of the program's primary contact.

B. Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative should be no longer than 5 pages and should describe the vision, goals and work of the applicant organization and the proposed project, including:

- Current fundraising strategy and how it builds your membership base;
- How your current fundraising strategy has built toward sustainability, challenges you have faced, and what the proposed project will allow you to do differently;
- Description of board, staff and volunteer involvement with small donor base and duties;
- Connection of fundraising to your programmatic work; and
- How you plan to document the work and your criteria for success.

C. Appendices

Please also include:

- 501c3 Letter;
- Organization Budget;
- Project Time line; and
- Staff bios.

For additional information, please contact Marisol Ramos at the New World Foundation, 212-497-3470 or mramos@newwf.org