



# 2016 Classic Grant Competition – Notice of Funding Availability Overview Webinar Transcript

This document is a transcript of a webinar covering the 2016 Social Innovation Fund Classic Notice of Federal Funding Availability (NOFA). It has been very lightly edited for print, and is presented in a conversational, rather than a formal tone. For official guidance, please see the NOFA.

Welcome to the 2016 SIF Classic Grant Competition Notice of Funding Availability Overview. We appreciate your interest in the Social Innovation Fund.



## Purpose

Provide an overview of the grant competition and its requirements for grantmaking organizations interested in SIF Classic (not for nonprofit service providers, who are not also grantmakers)

Note: We will be summarizing requirements; you must read the NOFA and the application instructions for detailed instructions

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Our intent today is to provide you with information on the SIF Classic grant competition.

Hopefully everyone has watched – or read the transcript of – the pre-recorded SIF Overview webinar. We won't be going into much detail on SIF overall during this presentation, but instead will focus on the Notice of Funding Availability, or NOFA.

However, you will need to read the NOFA and application instructions in their entirety in order to have all the information necessary to submit a competitive grant competition.

Please note that this webinar and this competition are not for organizations interested in our Pay for Success program. A Pay for Success competition is currently underway and we expect to announce another one later this year.

Nor is this for nonprofit service providers. Nonprofit service providers will have an opportunity, in the fall, to apply for funding from the Grantmakers that we select as part of this competition.

We will start by introducing the presenters then provide you with details of the competition.

That will be followed by a representative from a current grantee organization providing you a firsthand perspective on the SIF

We will pause for questions at a couple of points during the presentation, as well as at the end of it. And we will close by explaining the next steps for those interested in exploring this opportunity further

In order to reduce background noise, your phones were muted upon entry.

You may submit your questions at any time in the Q&A section of your webinar screen, or when prompted, by pressing \*1 on your phone and waiting for the operator.

Outline of Call	
1.	Introduction of Presenters
2.	2016 Competition Overview
3.	Current Grantee Perspective
4.	Q&A
5.	Next Steps

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### Presenters



**Lois Nembhard**  
Deputy Director  
Social Innovation Fund



**Pamela Dubitsky**  
Program Officer  
Social Innovation Fund



**Lili Allen**  
Associate Vice President,  
Reconnection Strategies  
and Designs  
Jobs for the Future

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My name is Lois Nembhard and I am the deputy director of the Social Innovation Fund, and I am joined by Pamela Dubitsky, a program officer with the SIF. We are pleased to have with us today Lili Allen, Associate Vice President for Reconnection Strategies and Designs at Jobs for the Future, a SIF grantee. Lili will be providing the grantee perspective.

So, let's begin with the presentation.

Up to \$39 million is available for Classic grants this year.

Applicants may apply for grants ranging from one to ten million dollars a year, although we would prefer to make grants of at least \$3-4 million per year for greater impact.

SIF grants are for a five-year project period.

We sometimes provide grantees with multiple years of funding at a time, but your initial request should be for one year. What we refer to as 'continuation' funding is provided in subsequent years contingent on performance and appropriations.

## Available Funding

- Up to \$39 million is available for Classic grants
- Grants range from \$1 – 10 million per year; looking for grants of \$ 3-4 million and up
- Five year project period

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## Seeking Grantmakers...

to partner with the SIF to grow the impact of innovative, community-based solutions that have compelling evidence of improving the lives of people in low-income communities throughout the United States.

The Social Innovation Fund's Classic Grant Program is a great opportunity for Grantmakers committed to finding what works – meaning identifying programs with evidence of effectiveness – and making it work for more people – or supporting those programs in growing their impact.

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## Issue Areas

- Economic opportunity
- Healthy futures
- Youth development

As discussed on the overview webinar, the programming that we support must fall into our issue areas of economic opportunity, healthy futures and youth development.

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## Funding Priorities

- Juvenile justice
- Technology
- Early childhood education

For this grant competition, we have three funding priorities of juvenile justice, technology and early childhood education.

While applicants proposing programs in these areas are not guaranteed funding, high scoring applications that address a priority are more likely to be recommended for funding than those that do not.

In order to receive priority consideration, applicants must demonstrate that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes, falls within one or more of SIF’s issue areas, and includes a high quality program design.

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## Funding Priorities

### Juvenile Justice

Strategies to improve outcomes for youth involved in, or at risk for involvement with, the juvenile justice system.

In regards to Juvenile Justice, we are looking for programs that would have a positive impact on the outcomes of youth already involved in, or at risk for involvement with, the juvenile justice system. Juvenile Justice programs would fall under our youth development issue area.

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## Funding Priorities

### Technology

Strategies to utilize technology to increase the impact of the proposed evidence-based social programs.

For the technology funding priority, we’re interested in strategies that use technology to accelerate the growth of the impact of evidence-based social programs.

Technology programs could potentially fall under any of our three issue areas.

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And our third funding priority this year is ‘Early Childhood Education,’ or programs that expand access to high quality early learning education that prepares children for longterm success.

This funding priority would fall under our youth development issue area. If you are interested in this funding priority, I suggest you review our website to see what early childhood education programs are already being funded and tested under the SIF.

## Funding Priorities

### Early Childhood Education

Strategies to expand access to high quality early learning education for children through age five that prepares them for lifelong success.

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## Eligible Applicants

### Grantmaking institutions:

- In existence at the time of application
- Give grants to nonprofit community organizations or programs as an essential, rather than a collateral, means of fulfilling mission and vision

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Now, let’s review the requirements to be an eligible applicant. You can be either an existing grantmaking institution or an eligible partnership.

First: a grantmaking institution must be in existence at the time of application, AND making grants to nonprofit organizations must be an essential part of what you do. You will explain this in your application, but the fact that grantmaking is an essential part of what you do should be obvious in publicly available information about your organization such as your website and other materials.

We have funded various types of grantmakers including traditional foundations, venture philanthropy funds, and grantmaking nonprofits such as United Ways. For the first time this year, universities are eligible to apply as long as they meet our definition of grantmaking institution.

Second, an eligible partnership is a formal relationship that includes an existing grantmaking institution, as well as another grantmaking institution, a state commission on national and community service, or a unit of local government.

The partner organizations would share responsibilities under the award.

For example, a partnership could include one organization that handles all aspects of a Social Innovation Fund program related to program management and oversight, while another organization handles all aspects related to finances and grant administration.

## Eligible Applicants

### Eligible partnerships:

- Formal relationships between an existing grantmaking institution AND
  - An additional grantmaking institution,
  - A State Commission on National and Community Service, OR
  - A unit of general local government
- Relationship is formalized through a legal agreement outlining the roles and responsibilities of each partner

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## Ineligible Applicants

- A unit of government is not considered to be an existing grantmaking institution.
  - A unit of general local government may *participate* in an eligible partnership; other units of government may *collaborate* with an existing grantmaking institution or eligible partnership
- Nonprofit service providers who are not also experienced grantmakers are not eligible to be intermediaries

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Even if it makes grants, units of government are not considered to be an existing grantmaking institution under the Social Innovation Fund. A unit of local government may participate in an eligible partnership, but cannot apply without an existing grantmaking institution partner

We often receive inquiries from nonprofit service providers that have a great model that they'd like to replicate; If they are not an existing and experienced grantmaker then they are not eligible to apply as a lead applicant. They could, however, apply in partnership with a grantmaker.

## What Are We Looking For?

### Grantmakers who have either:

- Identified an innovative and effective approach to solving a community challenge **OR**
- Identified a community challenge and is interested in identifying nonprofits with innovative and effective ways of solving it.

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So, what are we looking for in a grantmaker? There are two possible approaches.

Through its work, a grantmaker might have identified an innovative and effective approach to solving a community challenge that it is focused on.

Or a grantmaker might be interested in seeking out nonprofits with different innovative and effective approaches to solving the community challenge the grantmaker is focused on.

## What is Innovation?

**New ways to solve old problems** that are faster, cost-effective, data-driven and lead to **better results** for the public good

What is ‘innovation’ to the Social Innovation Fund?

We define innovation as a way of solving a problem that is faster, cheaper, more efficient, or produces a better outcome. You will tell us how your solution or the solutions subgrantees bring are better than what is already occurring in communities of need.

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As you design your proposed program, you will need to determine what type of SIF you want to be. You can either be a geographically-based SIF – addressing outcomes in one or more of our issue areas, in a specified geographic area, OR an issue-based SIF – addressing outcomes focused on one of our issue areas, in multiple geographic areas.

As an example, Mile High United Way, first funded by the SIF in 2011, is addressing third grade literacy rates in Colorado, as a geographically-based SIF.

Jobs for the Future, on the other hand, is improving outcomes for disconnected youth in communities across the country.

## Types of SIFs

### Geographically-Based Social Innovation Fund

Serves low-income communities within a specific local geographic area, and focuses on improving measurable outcomes in one or more of the three issue areas

### Issue-Based Social Innovation Fund

Serves low-income communities within multiple geographic areas, and focuses on improving measurable outcomes in one of the three issue areas

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## Questions?

You may submit questions by using the Q&A function on WebEx or by dialing \* 1 on the telephone for the operator to open your line.

Before we move on to a discussion of key requirements, let’s see if we have any questions so far.

You may either submit questions in the Q&A function in the webinar, or press \*1 and wait for the operator.

[Questions asked during the webinar were added to the Frequently Asked Questions page available at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/faqs>]

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Understanding The SIF’s key requirements is critical to developing a competitive application for SIF funding.

The selection criteria are spelled out in the NOFA and outline – in detail – the information you are to provide in your application narrative. By responding to the criteria you have an opportunity to explain how you will address key SIF program requirements, including the key requirements listed here.

## Key Requirements

- **Match**
- **Subgranting**
- **Growing Program Impact**
- **Evidence and Evaluation**
- **Federal Grants Management**
- **Subgrantee Management & Oversight**

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## Match

### Two-Tier Requirement

- Dollar-for-dollar cash, non-federal match required of both intermediaries and subgrantees
- At time of application, must demonstrate ability to meet 50 percent of first year’s match requirement
- Strong capacity and commitment to assist subgrantees with fundraising

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Let’s start with match.

The SIF has a two-tier matching requirement.

Grantees – which is what you would be if approved for a grant – must match the funds they receive from the SIF on a one-to-one basis, in cash from non-federal sources. So, for example, if you receive a 5 million dollar annual grant, you must raise 5 million dollars in cash; together, your annual grant plus your cash match funds a 10 million dollar annual program.

Subgrantees – the organizations that you will fund to implement your SIF program, have the same requirement. They must match the funds they receive from you on a one-to-one basis, in cash from non-federal sources. So, if you award each of them a 500,000 dollar grant, they must each match it with 500,000 dollars in cash for a 1 million dollar annual program.

Additionally, applicants to the SIF must demonstrate at the time of application that they have 50% of the first year’s annual match either committed or in hand. For example, if you’re applying for a two-million dollar-a-year grant you need to have one million dollars of that money available when you apply.

Refer to the NOFA on how to document this.

You also will be asked to discuss how you’ll meet the match requirement going forward in terms of fundraising for yourself, and also how you will help your subgrantees in their fundraising. It’s an arduous



task and we want to make sure selected grantees are up for the challenge.

Let's now talk about subgranting. The SIF requires an open competition. You must issue a brand new request for proposals or RFP with awarded SIF funds. Programs that you currently fund may apply but you cannot limit the RFP only to organizations that are in current networks or portfolios – you have to allow other organizations to apply as well.

## Subgranting

- An open, competitive selection process is required
  - i.e. open to nonprofit organizations beyond own existing grant portfolio or network

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There are two approaches to subgranting. In the NOFA, we refer to these as Strategy A and Strategy B. Regardless of the approach you choose, you will have identified a specific social problem that you want to address.

For Strategy A, in your application to us, you are describing the problem you want to address, and making the case that appropriate, evidence-based interventions to address that problem exist. Then, after you are awarded a SIF grant, you will select, through an open competition, organizations that have identified innovative, evidence-based solutions to the problem you have identified. So with this strategy, as you are assessing and selecting prospective subgrantees, you are also assessing and selecting interventions or programs.

For Strategy B, in your application to us, you are not only describing the problem you want to address, but also the intervention or interventions that you will be implementing. You will also need to make the case that your intervention has at least a preliminary level of evidence of effectiveness. Then after you are awarded a SIF grant, you will select, through an open competition, organizations that have the capacity to implement the interventions you have already identified.

## Subgranting

Applicants may propose subaward funding strategies that are of two distinct types. In both cases, the recipient will have defined a specific social problem it intends to address through its own Social Innovation Fund.

- Strategy A: The applicant seeks and invests in subrecipient organizations that have developed or implemented innovative, evidence-based solutions to the specified problem.
- Strategy B: The applicant has identified an innovative, evidence-based solution and seeks subrecipients that are able to effectively implement that solution

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Selected applicants will need to be ready to hit the ground running. Subgrantee selection plans are due soon after the award and the selection process must be completed within six to eight months, so it's a pretty tight turnaround.

If you choose Strategy A, meaning that you are selecting subgrantees that have identified their own programs, then you have 8 months to complete your subgrantee selection process – from developing and issuing your RFP to awarding your subgrants.

If you choose Strategy B, meaning that you identified the program and we assessed it in your application to us, then you have 6 months to complete your subgrantee selection process.

Subgrants must be at least 100,000 dollars a year, so when matched, you have at least a 200,000 dollar-per-year program budget for each subgrantee. Subgrants must be for a period of three to four years.

If you are selecting subgrantees with their own interventions, we expect that you will give larger awards to those who have higher levels of evidence that their programs work.

## Subgranting (cont.)

- Subgrantee selection plan due within two weeks of grant award
- Subgrantees must be selected within six to eight months of grant award, depending on intermediary's approach
- Annual subgrant amounts of \$100,000 or greater
- Subgrant periods of three to five years
- Larger grant awards to programs with higher levels of evidence

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## Subgrantee Eligibility

Organizations eligible to be subgrantees include:

- Nonprofit community organizations and
- Nonprofit institutions of higher education

that carry out innovative, effective initiatives to address community challenges.

Organizations eligible to be subgrantees in your SIF project are Nonprofit community organizations and Nonprofit institutions of higher education that carry out innovative, effective initiatives to address community challenges.

The NOFA provides the specific statutory citation and definition of nonprofit organization.

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SIF grantees are expected to support the growth of the programs they fund. There are different ways to approach this – for some, growing program impact means expanding existing program sites; for other others, it means replicating programs in new and different communities.

We also expect there will be a direct and positive relationship between the level of growth proposed and the level of evidence the intervention has at the time it is selected for funding. For example, an intervention that has strong evidence of impact would be expected to have a more ambitious growth plan than an intervention with preliminary evidence.

Regardless of the approach, all growth strategies should involve expanding interventions so that more people in low-income communities may benefit from them.

## Growing Program Impact

- Different approaches to growing impact, such as expansion of existing program sites and replication in new communities
- Direct, positive relationships between level of growth and level of evidence
- All approaches should expand interventions so that more people derive substantial, measureable benefit

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## Evidence & Evaluation Expectations

- Rigorous evaluation is required, to not only assess effectiveness, but also to build the existing evidence base for the intervention/model
- Evaluations are expected to be conducted by third party, independent evaluation partners
  - Evaluators will need to be selected according to federal procurement guidelines

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The SIF sees evaluation as a crucial, if not critical, component of what we do. Evaluation is a tool for proving and improving programs, so we encourage and support a learning approach to both programming and evaluation.

Successful applicants will need to show that they have the capacity to comply with our evaluation requirements. Please note that third-party evaluations are required to meet the SIF expectations. After being selected for SIF funding, you would select an independent evaluator, following federal procurement standards. You should not assume you'll be able to continue using an evaluator that you have been working with.

This slide outlines the SIF’s evaluation requirements. All funded interventions must have at least preliminary evidence as they enter the SIF, and they must design and carry out an evaluation that targets moderate or strong levels of evidence by the end of the grant period.

CNCS will be assessing the evidence level of the interventions proposed and will also be providing technical assistance throughout this process.

### Evidence & Evaluation Expectations

- Begin with at least a preliminary level of evidence.
- Achieve moderate or strong level of evidence by the end of the grant
- CNCS assesses the evidence level of interventions identified in the intermediary’s applications
- Intermediaries are expected to assess evidence level of the interventions they select

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### Evidence Framework

Preliminary	Moderate	Strong
Reasonable hypothesis supported by credible research findings	Evaluations that support causal conclusions but cannot be generalized beyond the study group	Completed evaluation(s) that support causal conclusions with large range of participants or multiple evaluations supporting the same conclusion
<b>Minimum level of evidence required to receive SIF funding</b>	<b>Each evaluation must achieve a moderate or strong level of evidence by the end of the grant</b>	

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This slide illustrates the SIF’s evidence framework, which includes three levels of evidence: preliminary, moderate and strong.

For preliminary evidence, a program model or intervention must be supported by a theoretical framework and/or have previous research that supports the fact that it works. As I said before, all programs funded by the SIF must meet the minimum level of preliminary evidence to receive SIF funding.

### Preliminary Evidence

**Preliminary**

Program model is supported by theoretical framework and/or previous research

**Minimum level of evidence required to receive SIF funding**

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## Moderate Evidence

**Moderate**

Evaluations that support causal conclusions but cannot be generalized beyond the study group

Each evaluation must achieve at least moderate by the end of the grant

Next is moderate – to meet moderate levels of evidence the program model or intervention must have evaluations that support causal conclusions. For interventions with moderate levels of evidence, these conclusions can't be generalized beyond the study group.

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## Strong Evidence

Programs with strong levels of evidence are those that have conducted evaluations that support causal conclusions with a large range of participants or multiple evaluations supporting the same conclusions, so they can be generalized across the population.

**Strong**

Completed evaluation(s) that support causal conclusions with large range of participants or multiple evaluations supporting the same conclusion

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## Evaluation Resources

- Assessing levels of evidence
- Evaluation Planning Process
- Evaluation Budgeting
- Evaluation Plan Guidance

There are helpful resources on our NOFA webpage to develop your understanding of our evaluation requirements and expectations. These include a tool for assessing the level of evidence for an intervention, an overview of the evaluation planning process, and tips on how to adequately budget for evaluation. There is also a lengthy Evaluation Plan Guidance document. It isn't required reading in order to apply for a grant, but scanning will give you a good sense of what will be expected of you if funded. It details our guidance to funded organizations on developing their evaluation plans. Funded organizations will receive a version of this document.

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It is important to recognize the federal grants management aspect of this funding opportunity.

Successful SIF grantees already have or quickly develop the capacity and systems necessary to ensure compliance with federal grant requirements and laws. You will want to have someone on staff who is experienced in managing a federal grant or who you immediately send to training.

There are specific requirements that often catch grantees off guard if they haven't previously received a federal grant such as how to select a contractor and the fact that fundraising can't be charged to the grant. In addition to requirements that are common across federal agencies, The Corporation for National and Community Service and the SIF have unique requirements you may not have seen elsewhere – such as the National Service Criminal History Checks.

## Federal Grants Management

SIF grantees are expected to develop and maintain systems to ensure compliance with grant requirements and laws, including:

- Program Requirements
- Administrative and national policy requirements
- National Service Criminal History Checks
- Reporting requirements

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## Subgrantee Management & Oversight

SIF grantees are expected to:

- Set and implement goals with subgrantees
- Evaluate subgrantee performance
- Monitor subgrantee compliance
- Provide technical assistance and support to ensure subgrantee success

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If selected to become a SIF grantee you will be required to comply with federal grant requirements. At the same time, you will be responsible for ensuring that your subgrantees meet all requirements of their subawards, as well.

This means you will need to have processes in place to assess subgrantees' progress toward program goals, monitor subgrantee compliance with grant requirements, and provide technical assistance and other support to help subgrantees achieve the desired outcomes.

I am now going to turn things over to Lili Allen from Jobs for the Future to provide her perspective.

**Lili:**

Project management is critical. You will need to get your project manager on board quickly and make sure you have a fiscal team that really understands federal grants – for example, the difference between subawards vs. contracts. The level of detail that this person needs to understand is beyond what you would see in typical grant-making. For example – if you are subcontracting with a vendor, when do they need to do background checks? What is a SIF-eligible beneficiary? How do federal funds and match funds have to be tracked?

Think about the technical assistance your subgrantees will need to do quality implementation. Some SIF grantees simply subgrant and then monitor their subgrantees. We built in extensive coaching to support the sites. Depending on what you are doing and the state of the field in your area, you may want to think about how you would structure this.

The first year is intensive in terms of deadlines. Almost immediately, you will need to submit a site selection plan. You'll need to select your sites and get the subgrant awards in place, and your sites will need to understand how to operate under federal requirements. You'll need to develop an evaluation plan. You'll need to develop a scaling plan. Be ready to launch and sprint as soon as you are notified of the award.

In terms of benefits, the SIF is enabling us to implement and evaluate our Back on Track interventions in a way that would not be possible otherwise. We will have an impact on the field that we think is really critical in terms of improving outcomes for our target population – opportunity youth and in particular young men of color. So the ability to build an evidence base through a rigorous third-party evaluation is really important to us. It has also brought in funders that we had not been able to tap or collaborate with before.

SIF staff are terrific. They are somewhat different from other federal agencies in the level of problem-

**Grantee Perspective**



**Lili Allen**  
Associate Vice President, Reconnection  
Strategies and Designs  
Jobs for the Future

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SERVICE

solving and collaboration they bring to the work.

## Review Process

- Expert review
- Monitor internal review
- Clarification (if necessary)
- Final decision
- Notification
- Grant award

Our review process is outlined further in the NOFA. Applications that meet our eligibility requirements will go through a review by experts in social innovation, our issue areas, and evaluation.

Next, the top applications will move on to an internal staff review.

During the period of clarification, finalists may receive requests for additional information or clarification on some of the content in their application.

Please note that participation in clarification does not guarantee selection as a grantee. Final decisions are made by senior leadership and the CEO of the Corporation, and grantees who are selected will be notified in August.

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## Key Dates

- Notice of intent to apply due **April 15, 2016** (encouraged)
- Application due **May 10, 2016 by 5 p.m. eastern**
- Notification: **August 2016**

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## Questions?

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We will now pause again for questions.

As a reminder, you may either submit questions in the Q&A function in the webinar, or press \*1 and wait for the operator.

[Questions asked during the webinar were added to the Frequently Asked Questions page available at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/faqs>]

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## Next Steps

[www.nationalservice.gov/SIF](http://www.nationalservice.gov/SIF)

Click on: 2016 Notice of Funding Availability

- NOFA and application instructions
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Evaluation and other resources
- Link to previous successful applications

I encourage you to go to our website for more information and some very helpful resources – particularly resources on evaluation component of SIF.

Also, please look over the applications of organizations that received funding. These can be helpful to you as you think through your own approach, budget, and program components.

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## How to Reach Us

**Email:** [SIFApplication@cns.gov](mailto:SIFApplication@cns.gov)

**Voicemail:** 202.606.3223

**Updates:** Sign up at [www.nationalservice.gov/sif](http://www.nationalservice.gov/sif)

If you have questions about the SIF application process, please reach us via e-mail at [SIFApplication@cns.gov](mailto:SIFApplication@cns.gov) or by the phone number listed.

You can also register to receive updates about the application at the website listed.

We hope this document is useful to you as you consider applying for a Social Innovation Fund grant. Please do contact us if you have questions.

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