



Social Innovation Fund Classic Grant Program Readiness Assessment

Introduction

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) is a powerful approach to transforming lives and communities that positions the federal government to be a catalyst for impact—mobilizing private resources to find and grow community solutions with evidence of results. SIF Classic grantmaking intermediaries must be ready to successfully identify, fund and support nonprofit organizations to implement, evaluate and scale evidence-based solutions that transform lives in low-income communities – and to do so in accordance with the SIF Classic Terms and Conditions and the OMB Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards).

As a funder, you likely have great latitude in overseeing your grant programs. Your relationship with your grantees may be flexible, even informal at times. Federal grant programs, by contrast, must adhere to stringent rules and regulations, and must operate under firm mandates set by statute.

While there are many benefits to becoming part of the SIF community of innovative, evidence-based grantmakers, the SIF is not easy money. Before you choose to apply for a SIF Classic grant, think carefully about whether your organization is prepared to meet the rigorous administrative, match funding, evaluation, and compliance requirements associated with the SIF Classic program. Furthermore, as a recipient of a federal award acting as a pass-through entity, you will have additional obligations for monitoring and oversight of your subgrantees. Finally, SIF Classic grantees are required to allocate time to participate in knowledge sharing activities, both within the SIF community and beyond.

Instructions

This self-assessment tool is designed to help you determine whether your organization is not only eligible to apply for a SIF Classic grant, but also ready to participate successfully in the SIF Classic program. The tool is broken out into three sections: (1) Organizational Eligibility; (2) Mission Fit; and (3) Organizational Capacity. The tool is meant to be self-administered and is best completed by key organizational leaders.

SECTION I: ORGANIZATION ELIGIBILITY

You MUST answer “Yes” to **one** of the two criteria in Section A to be eligible to apply for a SIF Classic grant.

Item	Yes	No
A. ELIGIBILITY		
1. We are an existing, experienced grantmaking institution that provides grants to nonprofit organizations as an essential means of fulfilling our mission, and grantmaking is a significant percentage of our annual operating budget.		
2. Our organization is part of an eligible partnership (e.g., established grantmaker(s) and/or state service commissions or local government) that would share grant responsibilities.		

SECTION II: MISSION FIT

While mission fit is not a requirement for eligibility, it is certainly a good indicator for whether this opportunity makes sense for your organization to pursue. The questions below will help you consider how well the SIF Classic program either aligns with your current practices or how it may help advance strategic goals.

Item	Yes	No
B. MISSION FIT		
1. The SIF Classic grant advances our mission and strategic goals.		
2. We have a demonstrated track record of providing grants to improve outcomes in the areas of healthy futures, economic opportunity, or youth development.		
3. Working through public-private partnerships is a key organizational strategy or goal for fulfilling our mission.		
4. Our Board is willing to commit significant organizational resources, both human and financial, to this initiative.		
5. We have sufficient organizational resources so that a SIF grant will not be negatively impacted by other ongoing initiatives' needs for staff time, dollars, etc.		

SECTION III: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

If awarded a grant, your organization must be prepared to adapt its policies and procedures and add new capacities as needed to undertake successful implementation of a SIF Classic grant. The following indicators will help you determine not only your basic readiness, but also the degree of organizational development and related investments that you may need to commit.

Item	Existing Capacity	Area for Capacity Growth
C. HUMAN RESOURCES		
1. We have existing full-time staff that we can redirect to work on required SIF startup tasks immediately after notification of grant award to be up and running within 30 days. <i>Existing Capacity – staff have already been identified;</i> <i>Area for Capacity Growth – leadership will need to determine how to staff up.</i>		
2. We have existing full-time staff, or we plan to hire qualified staff, to manage the SIF grant. <i>Existing Capacity – staff have already been identified;</i> <i>Area for Capacity Growth – leadership will need to determine how to staff up.</i>		

SECTION III: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (Cont.)

If awarded a grant, your organization must be prepared to adapt its policies and procedures and add new capacities as needed to undertake successful implementation of a SIF Classic grant. The following indicators will help you determine not only your basic readiness, but also the degree of organizational development and related investments that you may need to commit.

Item	Existing Capacity	Area for Capacity Growth
D. FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT		
<p>1. Our current finance staff has experience managing federal grants, including regranting and managing federal awards to subgrantees.</p> <p><i>Existing Capacity</i> – 2 or more years of experience; <i>Area for Capacity Growth</i> – 1 or less years of experience.</p>		
<p>2. Our policies and procedures address federal award management requirements, including procurement, internal controls, financial reporting, subawards, and subgrantee monitoring and oversight.</p> <p><i>Existing Capacity</i> – current policies comply with Uniform Guidance; <i>Area for Capacity Growth</i> – current policies will require revision in order to fully meet this criterion.</p> <p>Link: eCFR §200.302 Financial Management (http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=4ecd84505e66326c43f20ca00bb315ce&mc=true&node=se2.1.200_1302&rgn=div8)</p>		
<p>3. Our financial management system tracks federal and match funds by source and application and our finance staff is experienced in how to use the system to track federal funds.</p> <p><i>Existing Capacity</i> – our system is established and staff has experience on multiple federal grants; <i>Area for Capacity Growth</i> – we believe so, and our staff will need additional training.</p>		
E. SUBGRANTEE SELECTION, MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		
<p>1. We have the capacity to identify and fund high-performing organizations outside of our network.</p> <p><i>Existing Capacity</i> – we have the capacity and systems to expand beyond our existing network; <i>Area for Capacity Growth</i> – leadership will need to determine how to address this criterion.</p>		

SECTION III: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (Cont.)

If awarded a grant, your organization must be prepared to adapt its policies and procedures and add new capacities as needed to undertake successful implementation of a SIF Classic grant. The following indicators will help you determine not only your basic readiness, but also the degree of organizational development and related investments that you may need to commit.

Item	Existing Capacity	Area for Capacity Growth
<p>2. We have experience conducting risk assessments to select subgrantees and to determine subgrantee system strengths/gaps in order to inform monitoring and technical assistance plans.</p> <p><i>Existing Capacity</i> – we have a system in place and staff is experienced in conducting risk assessments;</p> <p><i>Area for Capacity Growth</i> – staff is familiar with the process and will need to develop a plan to do so.</p>		
<p>3. We have the capacity to provide oversight to insure subgrantees 1:1 match requirement is met.</p> <p><i>Existing Capacity</i> – staff regularly provide support to subgrantees in this area;</p> <p><i>Area for Capacity Growth</i> – staff will need training to provide subgrantee support.</p>		
<p>4. We have a system in place to ensure subgrantees receive training and technical assistance to implement their grant award in line with their terms and conditions.</p> <p><i>Existing Capacity</i> – our system is established;</p> <p><i>Area for Capacity Growth</i> – we need to develop a system.</p> <p>Link: CFR §200.328 Monitoring and reporting program performance (https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-sec200-327.pdf)</p>		
F. MATCH FUNDING		
<p>At the time of application submittal we will have 50% of the first year’s non–federal cash match or commitments for the match.</p> <p><i>Existing Capacity</i> – we have a combination of cash on–hand and commitments of at least 50% of the first year's match;</p> <p><i>Area for Capacity Growth</i> – we have a combination of cash on–hand and commitments for less than 50% of the first year’s match.</p>		

SECTION III: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (Cont.)

If awarded a grant, your organization must be prepared to adapt its policies and procedures and add new capacities as needed to undertake successful implementation of a SIF Classic grant. The following indicators will help you determine not only your basic readiness, but also the degree of organizational development and related investments that you may need to commit.

Item	Existing Capacity	Area for Capacity Growth
G. EVIDENCE AND EVALUATION		
<p>1. We have the capacity to help subgrantees undergo rigorous, independent, formal evaluations, in order to increase the level of evidence, thereby adding to the existing evidence base and developing greater understanding of what makes the program successful.</p> <p><i>Existing Capacity</i> – leadership has identified strategies and grant scaling to do so; <i>Area for Capacity Growth</i> – leadership believes we can develop strategies and grant scaling to do so.</p>		
<p>2. We have experience providing technical assistance and monitoring for the evaluation activities of subgrantees.</p> <p><i>Existing Capacity</i> – staff regularly provide support to subgrantees in this area; <i>Area for Capacity Growth</i> – staff will need training to provide subgrantee support.</p>		

Now, review your responses to each item above. This assessment was designed to pose questions to help you think carefully about whether a SIF Classic grant is a good fit with your organizational priorities, as well as your readiness for the rigor of this program. Be aware that organizations selected as SIF Classic grantees have a tight timeline for getting started. Shortly after being approved for funding, for example, grantees have just 15 days to submit their subgrantee selection plan for approval.

Your organization may be eligible to apply for the SIF Classic program based on your responses in Section I. However, if the self-assessment of the fit of SIF with your mission in Section II includes multiple no’s and/or your current capacity in the key areas in Section III requires significant development, you should seriously consider whether the investment of your organization’s staff time and effort to apply for a Social Innovation Fund grant is appropriate at this time.