

:010 PROGRAM TITLE: 93.711 – ARRA – STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES FUND

:020 POPULAR NAME (Abbreviated Name): SCF, Recovery Act.

:030 FEDERAL AGENCY: ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

:040 AUTHORIZATION: Section 1110 of the Social Security Act, and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Public Law 111-5.

:050 OBJECTIVES: This funding was appropriated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5). This funding will provide economic stimulus to the nation while furthering the ACF mission to promote the economic and social well-being of children, youth, families, and communities.

The objectives of the Strengthening Communities Fund (SCF) are to (1) fund entities to provide training, technical assistance, and financial assistance to local faith-based and community organizations enabling them to more fully participate in economic recovery and (2) build the capacity of State, Local, and Tribal governments to provide outreach to faith-based and community-based organizations. The funding is used to build capacity of government and nonprofit organizations to partner with local faith-based and community-based organizations, with a focus on expanding economic recovery efforts, increasing community access to public benefits (including ARRA benefits), and helping low- and moderate-income people secure and retain employment.

SCF is composed of two programs:

(1) SCF Nonprofit Capacity Building Program

The focus of the SCF Nonprofit Capacity Building Program is to fund organizations that provide training, technical assistance, and competitive financial assistance to faith-based and community-based nonprofit organizations to help them address the broad economic recovery issues present in their communities, including helping low-income individuals secure and retain employment, earn higher wages, obtain better-quality jobs, and increase access to State and Federal benefits and tax credits.

(2) SFC Government Capacity Building Program

The focus of the SCF State, Local, and Tribal Government Capacity Building Program is to build the sustainability and effectiveness of the government entities that provide outreach to faith-based and community-based organizations. Ultimately, these partnerships will enable local nonprofit organizations to better serve those in need and to increase nonprofit organizations' involvement in the economic recovery. Government entities or their designees will use program funds to develop their capacity to serve as a resource to nonprofit organizations and other government agencies regarding ARRA funding/benefits to ensure that disadvantaged and hard-to-serve populations are aware of and understand how to access the benefits and services described in the ARRA. Grantees also will use program funds to offer free capacity building services to nonprofit

organizations to improve awareness of and access to ARRA efforts/benefits, improve nonprofits' organizational capacities to be active participants in ARRA efforts, and facilitate partnerships between and among nonprofits and other government agencies. For example, grantees could establish a beneficiary benefits clearinghouse for individuals and a funding opportunities clearinghouse for nonprofit organizations, provide outreach and education, and deliver training and technical assistance.

:060 TYPES OF ASSISTANCE: Grants and Cooperative Agreements.

:070 USES AND USE RESTRICTIONS: Under the SCF Nonprofit Capacity Building Program, lead organizations assist nonprofit project partners in distressed communities with capacity building activities in four critical areas: (1) organizational development, (2) program development, (3) collaboration and community engagement (4) leadership development and (5) evaluating their effectiveness. Capacity building activities are designed to increase an organization's sustainability and effectiveness, enhance its ability to provide social services, and create collaborations to better serve those in need. Lead organizations use the award funds to provide two services within their communities: (1) training and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations; and (2) competitive financial assistance to some subset of the nonprofit organizations receiving training and technical assistance. Training and technical assistance activities are conducted at no cost to interested nonprofit organizations. Each organization will also provide subawards to local non-profits to help these organizations build the capacity to expand and strengthen programs and services related to helping low-income individuals secure and retain employment, earn higher wages, and obtain better-quality jobs. Examples of these capacity building activities include staff training, technical assistance, and materials and equipment to enhance efficiency or enable the ability to provide a new service. Funds also help organizations build capacity to expand and strengthen programs aimed at increasing low- and moderate-income individuals' access to the state and Federal benefits and tax credits for which individuals are eligible. Examples include developing organizational capacity to offer a counselor-assisted centralized electronic screening and application tool, establishing procedures to assess eligibility of prospective and current clients for benefits and tax credits, developing referral protocols with other local service providers, developing a guide/clearinghouse of benefits and tax credits, and developing the capacity to offer free tax preparation assistance.

Under the SCF State, Local, and Tribal Government Capacity Building Program, funds are awarded to State, city, county and tribal government offices (e.g., offices responsible for outreach to faith-based and community organizations or those offices interested in initiating such an effort) or their designees for the purpose of building the sustainability and effectiveness of the government entities, other government agencies and ultimately local nonprofits to better serve those in need. Specifically, funds are used to build the capacity of organizations that are contributing to the economic recovery and help Federal, State, and local governments ensure that the information and services described in the ARRA reach disadvantaged and hard-to-serve populations. Grantees use program funds to provide free capacity building services to nonprofit organizations, such as developing a funding opportunities clearinghouse and/or training and technical assistance to improve

access to ARRA funding/benefits and to improve organizational capacity to be competitive applicants for ARRA funding/benefits. Grantees also will use program funds to build their own capacity to provide these services to nonprofits. Priority for awards will be given to State and Indian/Native American Tribal governments and such governments' designees. Grantees must also use funds to measure their own effectiveness and help non-profit organizations develop ways to measure their effectiveness.

Funding restrictions include the following: Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred solely to raise capital or obtain contributions, are unallowable under this program. Awards will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs. Construction is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this program. Purchase of real property is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this program. The SCF grantees and project partners (including subawardees) may not use funds for direct social service provisions. Funds are intended to help grantees and their partners build and strengthen their capacity to provide services. The cost of the augmentation or supplanting of direct services is unallowable. Direct Federal grants, financial assistance funds, or contracts under the Department of Health and Human Services shall not be used to support inherently religious activities such as religious instruction, worship, or proselytization. Organizations that receive HHS funds may not engage in inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization, as part of the programs or services funded with HHS funds. An organization receiving a SCF award shall not, in providing Federally-funded services, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion or religious belief. SCF program funding may not pay for capacity building activities that support medical and/or health care related activities or items such as medical equipment or supplies or medically-oriented trainings, certifications, or licensures. SCF Nonprofit Capacity Building Program lead organizations may not provide competitive financial assistance to a health care organization. A grantee is not to use award funds to provide a contract to organizations that provide the grantee with a cost share match.

#### :080 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

:081 Application Eligibility: (SCF Nonprofit Capacity Building Cooperative Agreements): state governments; county governments; city or township governments; special district governments; public and state-controlled institutions of higher education; Indian/Native American Tribal governments (Federally recognized); nonprofits with 501(c)(3) IRS status (other than institutions of higher education); nonprofits without 501(c)(3) IRS status (other than institutions of higher education); private institutions of higher education; for profit organizations (other than small businesses); small businesses; and faith-based and community organizations that meet the statutory eligibility requirements. Application Eligibility (SCF State, Local, and Tribal Government Capacity Building Grants): state governments; county governments; city or township governments; Indian/Native American Tribal governments (federally recognized); nonprofits with or without 501(c)(3) IRS status (other than institutions of higher education), if designated as Authorized Entities by the government entity.

:082 Beneficiary Eligibility: Funds are used to build the capacity of organizations that are contributing to the economic recovery and help Federal, State, and local governments ensure that the information and services described in the ARRA reach disadvantaged and hard-to-serve populations. Funds help organizations build the capacity to expand and strengthen programs and services related to helping low-income individuals secure and retain employment, earn higher wages, and obtain better-quality jobs. Funds also help organizations build the capacity to expand and strengthen programs that increase low- and moderate-income individuals' access to the state and federal benefits and tax credits for which individuals are eligible, such as by offering counselor-assisted use of a centralized electronic eligibility screening tool that simplifies the benefit application process. A nonprofit organization receiving training, technical or financial assistance under this program could operate a one-stop center where individuals can obtain free, customized benefits information, tax information, information on ARRA, and/or apply for benefits and file tax returns.

:083 Credentials/Documentation: The ARRA SCF Funding Opportunity Announcements will specify the required documentation that must be submitted with the applications and by time of the award.

#### :090 APPLICATION AND AWARD PROCESS:

:091 Preapplication Coordination: This program is eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her state for more information on the process the state requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the state has selected the program for review.

:092 Application Procedure: Prepare and submit applications according to the instructions provided in the applicable ARRA SCF Funding Opportunity Announcement which can be found online at Grants.gov or on the ACF website: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/>.

:093 Award Procedure: Applications received by the due date will be reviewed and scored competitively. Experts in the field, generally persons from outside the Federal government, will use the evaluation criteria listed in Part V of the Program Announcement to review and score the applications. The results of the review will be a primary factor in making funding decisions. ACF also may solicit comments from Regional Office staff and other Federal agencies. ACF may consider a variety of factors in addition to the review criteria identified above, including geographic diversity/coverage and types of applicant organizations, in order to ensure that the interests of the federal government are met in making the final selections. Furthermore, ACF may limit the number of awards made to the same or affiliated organizations although they would service different geographic areas. The successful applicants will be notified through issuance of a Financial Assistance Award document which sets forth the

amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-Federal share to be provided, and the total project period for which support is contemplated. The Financial Assistance Award will be signed by the Grants Officer.

:094 Deadlines: Deadlines for grants are announced in [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) as a part of the solicitation of applicants.

:095 Range of Approval/Disapproval Time: Approximately 90 days.

:096 Appeals: None.

:097 Renewals: ACF may extend application deadlines when circumstances such as acts of God (floods, hurricanes, etc.) occur, or when there are widespread disruption of mail service. Determination to extend or waive deadline requirements rest with the Chief Grants Management Officer.

#### :100 ASSISTANCE CONSIDERATIONS:

:101 Formula and Matching Requirements: Awardees must provide at least 20 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the ACF (Federal) share and the non-Federal share. The non-Federal share may be met by cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. Awardees will be held accountable for commitments of non-Federal resources even if they exceed the amount of the required match. Failure to provide the required amount will result in the disallowance of federal funds. A lack of supporting documentation at the time of application will not exclude the application from competitive review.

:102 Length and Time Phasing of Assistance: SCF grants and cooperative agreements are for project/budget periods of 24 months.

#### :110 POST ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS:

:111 Reports: Funded organizations must submit quarterly reports required by Section 1512 of the Recovery Act. In addition, funded grantees are required to submit Performance Progress Reports, and semi-annual financial status reports using the required standard form (SF-269) which is located on the Internet at: <http://forms.psc.gov/forms/sf/SF-269.pdf>.

:112 Audits: In accordance with the provisions of OMB Circular No. A-133 (Revised, June 24, 1997), Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations, non-federal entities that receive financial assistance of \$500,000 or more in federal awards will have a single or a program-specific audit conducted for that year. Non-federal entities that expend less than \$500,000 a year in federal awards are exempt from the federal audit requirements for that year, except as noted in Circular No. A-133.

:113 Records: SCF complies with 74.50 Purpose of reports and records, 74.51 Monitoring and reporting program performance and 74.52 Financial reporting of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

:120 FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

:121 Account Identification: 75-1537-0-1-506. TAFS: 75-0910-1537.

:122 Obligations: FY 08 \$0; FY 09 est \$49,000,000; FY 10 est \$1,000,000.

:123 Range and Average of Financial Assistance: \$1,000,000 for 24 months for SCF Nonprofit Capacity Building Program; \$250,000 for 24 months for SCF State, Local, and Tribal Government Capacity Building Program.

:130 PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS: None. This is a new program.

:140 REGULATIONS, GUIDELINES, AND LITERATURE: None.

:150 INFORMATION CONTACTS:

:151 Regional or Local Office: Program Manager, Office of Community Services (OCS), Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, 370 L'Enfant Promenade, 5th Floor West, Washington, DC 20447. Contact: Thom Campbell, Telephone: (202) 401-5483 (office); (202) 401-4719 (fax); [thom.campbell@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:thom.campbell@acf.hhs.gov).

:152 Headquarters Office: Program Manager, Office of Community Services (OCS), Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, 370 L'Enfant Promenade, 5th Floor West, Washington, DC 20447. Contact: Thom Campbell (202) 401-5483 (office); (202) 401-4719 (fax); [thom.campbell@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:thom.campbell@acf.hhs.gov).

:153 Web Site Address: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/index.html>

:160 RELATED PROGRAMS: None.

:170 EXAMPLES OF FUNDED PROJECTS: None. This is a new program.

:180 CRITERIA FOR SELECTING PROPOSALS: Applicant organizations are evaluated on the following criteria: Project Abstract, Objectives and Need for Assistance, Approach, Organizational Profiles, Evaluation and Budget and Budget Justification. Applicants will be evaluated under the budget and budget justification criteria on the extent to which they include a budget that is clear, easy to understand, and provides a detailed justification for the amount requested.