

Social Innovation Fund: Glossary of Key Terms

For my perspective, see <http://FamilyCourtMatters.org> 3/10/2017 post "Should the USA Join the Commonwealth?..." shortlink (case-sensitive) <http://wp.me/psBXH-5VC>"

Tax-exempt orgs. are not taxed. Most people are. Money is drawn (through people controlling it) to sources where it will not be taxed, over time creating a growing economic gap. What's more, any serious survey of 990s shows that many entities don't or won't follow IRS instructions, proof for internal consistency, or provide a readable form in the public interest. Some, even stay registered with the IRS. This is literally an internal "colonization of the USA operation" through power shift from the public to private sector (mediated by Congress & President)

SIF: The Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a key White House initiative and program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, combines public and private resources 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.

CNCS: Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is an independent federal agency with the mission to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. The agency administers the SIF.

Focus Areas: Programmatic areas that address similar issues or challenges. The three focus areas that SIF supports are youth development; healthy futures; economic opportunity.

Evidence-based Initiatives: In this context, a federal initiative that seeks to promote programs rooted in science and research. There currently are six federally funded evidence-based initiatives, of which SIF is one.

Intermediary: A non-profit, grant-making organization that can apply for SIF funds. If chosen through CNCS' grant-making processes, this organization will select a number of subgrantees to participate in its SIF portfolio and to which it will disburse SIF funds. An intermediary is required to match SIF funds one-to-one.

Subgrantee: A non-profit organization that implements a program aimed at addressing a social or community challenge. These organizations are chosen to receive SIF funds through an intermediary organization, and join other such organizations as a part of the intermediary's SIF portfolio. Subgrantees are required to conduct a program evaluation that is rigorous and builds upon the existing body of evidence for the program's intervention. Subgrantees are required to match intermediary funds one-to-one.

Intermediaries here by definition are "nonprofit orgs" which = tax-exempt corps (often, foundations)

SIF Cohort: A group of intermediaries chosen in a particular funding year. Currently, there are three SIF cohorts, one in each of the following years: 2010, 2011, and 2012. The term also encompasses each intermediary's subgrantees: 2010 cohort of 11 intermediaries, 154 subgrantees; 2011 cohort of 5 intermediaries 48 subgrantees, and; 2012 cohort of four intermediaries, that have selected a number of subgrantees but are currently still in process to select more.

Scaling Up: A term that means increasing the size and reach of a subgrantees intervention or program.

Matching Funds: Federal requirements of dollar match by a non-federal entity in order to be eligible to receive grant funding.

Intervention: A program's activity or model that addresses a social or community challenge. The intervention is what is evaluated in the SIF.

Body of Evidence: A collection of science-based studies or research that support the effectiveness of a subgrantees program or intervention.

"Cohort" is a military term. So would seem to be "scaling up" after establishing an initial outpost. Sooner or later I hope the reality of just what this is all about sinks in. Sooner would be better — this is progressive power-shifting to private hands by Congress' appropriation.

Level of Evidence: A particular location along a continuum of programmatic evidence, ranging from anecdotal information (participant stories) to rigorous causal studies. For the purposes of SIF, the continuum is broken up into three distinct segments: preliminary, moderate, and strong. A subgrantee is assessed after being selected by an intermediary, or upon "entry" to SIF, and again after completing the grant cycle, or upon "exit."

Just be aware that this talk of "science-based studies" comes from the same people (and branch of federal government) which gave us "faith-based organization" in descriptions of who can access funding but (at least at HHS) provides, still, NO measurement possible (as a CFDA or on TAGGS.HHS.GOV) any select filter specifying which organizations are indeed "faith-based!"

nationalservice.gov/SIF

"Science" here of course will involve some stats and numbers (or it wouldn't pass for "science") BUT will have a heavy dose of "SOCIAL science." As with THEOLOGY, give someone platform & a paycheck (or honorarium) and he (for several religions it's a "he" only) will prove SOME-THING from the scriptures, while the listeners, meanwhile, are distracted from keeping their eye on the books (and their wallets), or their own basic observation and cognition (!) active.

Sound like someone is trying just a little too hard to sound scientific? FYI, using words like "causal" or (repeatedly) "evidence" doesn't imply a scientific proof or logical argument just took place, or "rigorous" that it was objective. In fact "causal" indicates speculation.

Subgrantee Evaluation Plan (SEP):	This term signifies the evaluation plan developed by subgrantees.
Unified Subgrantee Evaluation Plan (UniSEP):	A single subgrantee evaluation plan that an intermediary applies to the evaluation of multiple subgrantees' programs in cases where multiple subgrantees are implementing an intervention across multiple sites.
Entry Level of Evidence:	A designation of either preliminary, moderate, or strong based on CNCS' assessment of the initial body of evidence behind a program's intervention.
Target Level of Evidence:	A designation of either preliminary, moderate, or strong based on CNCS' assessment of the outcomes of the executed evaluation that was designated by the SEP upon exit from the grant program.
Preliminary Level of Evidence:	Interventions with all other types of outcome studies (e.g., pre-post test studies, studies monitoring outcomes throughout an intervention) were designated as "preliminary." Interventions that were based on reasonable hypotheses supported by research findings (e.g., a body of literature that supports the use of the general type of intervention, but not the specific program as conducted by the grantee/subgrantee) were also designated as having preliminary evidence.
Moderate Level of Evidence:	Interventions were designated as having "moderate" evidence if they had at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental study, or multiple examples of correlational research with statistical controls supporting the effectiveness of the program.
Strong Level of Evidence:	Interventions were designated as having "strong" evidence if they had "(1) more than one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study or well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study that supports the effectiveness of the practice, strategy, or program; or (2) one large, well-designed and well-implemented randomized controlled multisite trial that supports the effectiveness of the practice, strategy, or program."
Internal Validity:	The extent to which a study can support causal conclusions by reducing systematic error or biases.
External Validity:	The extent to which a study's results can be generalized to locations, contexts or populations beyond those actually in the study itself.
Experimental Design:	Experimental design studies using random control trials or RCTs randomly assign program participants to two distinct groups: the treatment group, which receives program services, and the control group, which does not. The control group is called the "counterfactual," representing the condition in which the program or intervention is absent. Random assignment ensures that the treatment and control groups are initially similar and do not differ on background characteristics or other factors. Thus, random assignment creates an evaluation design where any observed differences between the two groups after the program intervention takes place can be attributed to the intervention with a high degree of confidence.
Random Assignment:	A process that uses randomly generated numbers or other approaches to assign study units to groups in ways that are unaffected by the characteristics of the study units. With random assignment, any differences between the groups at pre-test can be attributed only to chance. The use, or lack of use, of this process differentiates experimental designs from non-experimental designs.

**Quasi-Experimental
Design:**

A design that forms a counterfactual group by means other than random assignment. This approach is used for conducting impact evaluations where observed changes in the treatment group are compared with a comparison group (as counterfactual representing an absence of intervention) to assess and estimate the impact of the program on participants. However, groups formed in these designs typically differ for reasons other than chance, and these differences may influence the impact estimate. There are different types of approaches used in quasi-experimental designs such as those using Propensity Score Matching (PSM), Regression Discontinuity, Interrupted Time Series (ITS) and others.

**Propensity Score
Matching:**

A statistical matching approach that is sometimes employed in quasi-experimental design studies for the purposes of developing a comparison group. This approach is based on a predicted probability of group membership (e.g., intervention vs. control) using measured characteristics of study units as predictors. The predicted probabilities are typically obtained from logistic regression.

**Regression
Discontinuity Design:**

This is a specific quasi-experimental design approach that is used for evaluating causal effects of interventions. Under this approach assignment to a treatment is determined at least partly by the value of an observed covariate lying on either side of a fixed threshold. The intervention and control group are formed using a well-defined cutoff score. The group below the cutoff score receives the intervention and the group above does not, or vice versa. For example, if students are selected for a program based on test scores, those just above the score and just below the score are expected to be very similar except for participation in the program, and can be compared with each other to determine the program's impact.

**Interrupted Time
Series:**

This is a specific quasi-experimental design approach that is used for evaluating causal effects of interventions. Under this approach multiple observations are obtained prior to the intervention to establish a baseline. Multiple observations are also obtained after the intervention. Effects are demonstrated when the observations after the intervention deviate from expectations derived from baseline projections.

**Non-Experimental
Design:**

The term is a catch-all category that refers to a range of research and evaluation studies that do not fall under the experimental or quasi-experimental research designs. They include process and outcomes evaluations, spanning pre-post test designs without comparison groups, case studies, cost effectiveness, cost benefit analysis or other cost studies, feasibility studies, rapid assessments, situational and contribution analysis, developmental evaluation, strategic learning, systems change studies, and others.

About the Social Innovation Fund (SIF)

The SIF is a federal program intended to foster innovation to transform lives and communities. A program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) launched in 2010, it is one of six Obama Administration “tiered-evidence initiatives” embodying the principles of social innovation. As a program, it leverages federal funds through public-private collaborations by granting money to highly successful intermediary grant-makers who in turn find, improve, and grow promising community solutions with evidence of successful outcomes in youth development, economic opportunity, and health.

The SIF is characterized by the unique interplay of six key elements:

1. It relies on intermediary grant-making institutions to implement the program – they take on the role of finding, selecting, monitoring, supporting, evaluating and reporting on the nonprofit programs implementing community-based interventions.
2. It is a tier-based evidence program that requires all funded programs/interventions to demonstrate at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness, or funding “what works.”
3. The SIF requires that all programs or interventions implement a rigorous evaluation that will build on their level of evidence
4. SIF intermediaries are charged with scaling evidence-based programs – increasing their impact within their community or to communities across the country – and as such, grapple with a field-wide challenge of how best to successfully and efficiently do so.
5. The SIF leverages public-private partnerships to effect large-scale community impact in ways that either a traditional federal grant investment or a philanthropic grant investment could not achieve on its own. This includes its unique leveraged funding model to support nonprofit programs.
6. The SIF is committed to improving the effectiveness of nonprofits, funders, and other federal agencies by capturing learning and best practices and promoting approaches that will generate the greatest impact for individuals and communities.

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 

Corporation for National and Community Service
1201 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20525

TEL: (202) 606-5000

TTY: (202) 606-3472

NationalService.gov