



## **June Funding Tip**

### **Tip: Accessing Federal Funding – Promise Neighborhoods**

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010 the US Department of Education (ED) officially launched the Promise Neighborhoods Program, which will provide 20 one-year grants of between \$400,000 and \$500,000 to plan comprehensive antipoverty projects in urban neighborhoods, rural areas, or tribal communities. This funding tip provides information and resources for organizations considering accessing these funds.

Inspired by the Success of Harlem Children’s Zone, the Promise Neighborhoods Program provides a total of \$10 million in FY 2010 for organizations to plan the implementation of cradle-to-career services designed to improve educational outcomes for students in distressed neighborhoods. Grantees will work with schools in these neighborhoods to plan services that prepare students for success in college and careers.

While the June 25, 2010 application deadline for this competition is fast approaching, additional Promise Neighborhood grants may be available in the future. In its 2011 budget request, the Obama administration has requested another \$210 million to support 10 five-year Promise Neighborhoods implementation grants and additional planning grants. ED has clearly stated that communities which do not receive the planning grants in 2010 will still be eligible to receive implementation grants in 2011. Even without federal funding for planning, communities could conduct similar planning activities with local or private funding and be well-positioned to receive implementation grants in 2011.

When considering federal funding sources, program leaders should think strategically about which sources are worth pursuing. Consider the following questions to assess if a source meets your program’s goals and resource needs.

- 1. Does this funding support the goals and priorities of my organization?**
- 2. How do I access these funds or services?** What types of programs or organizations can apply for funds? Can youth programs apply directly for the funds or do funds flow through other entities?
- 3. Should I pursue this opportunity?** Is my organization well-positioned to access these funds or services? Given the expected return, is it worth the time and effort to apply?

#### **1. Does this funding support the goals and priorities of my organization?**

Organizations should consider accessing Promise Neighborhoods funding when their goals and priorities align with the program. A primary goal of this funding source is establishing “cradle-through-college-to career solutions.” This means establishing evidence-based policies and services, with strong schools at the center, designed to ensure that children improve academic and developmental outcomes. For example, communities could use Promise Neighborhoods funding to develop plans to better collect, analyze, and use data to support services for children.

Another important goal of the initiative is to break down public agency silos in the communities receiving Promise Neighborhoods grants. Communities could use the funding to develop a plan for ensuring that public agencies are collaborating, sharing data, and coordinating services for children and families. Organizations considering applying should have a strong commitment to and history of implementing effective partnerships to better serve youth.

## 2. How do I access these funds?

Non-profit organizations (including faith-based organizations) and institutions of higher education are eligible to receive Promise Neighborhoods funding. Eligible entities must also:

- Operate a school or partner with a school;
- Focus on a neighborhood in which there are multiple signs of distress;
- Currently provide at-least one of the cradle to career solutions they are proposing to implement; and
- Be representative of the neighborhood they are proposing to serve, meaning that residents of the Promise Neighborhood should have an active role in decision-making and should be included in the entities' governing board.

All Promise Neighborhoods applicants are required to submit their application electronically through ED's e-Grants system. The full application package is available at:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html>

The application deadline is June 25, and grants will be awarded by September 2010.

Policy Link, a national research and action institute that works to advance economic and social equity, has established a Promise Neighborhoods Institute (<http://www.promiseneighborhoodsinstitute.org/>) to support organizations seeking to implement Promise Neighborhood practices in their communities. This center houses a variety of planning resources, including a Grant Writing Guide that helps organizations navigate the application process and provides tips for constructing a strong proposal.

## 3. Should I pursue this opportunity?

- ✓ **Matching funds are required.** Grantees must secure matching funds from private or non-federal public sources of at least 50 percent of the granted awards (with some exceptions for rural and tribal communities). In-kind funds can be used to the extent allowed by specific ED requirements listed in the grant application.
- ✓ **The planning timeframe is short.** Promise Neighborhoods grants are likely to be very competitive, and communities without a strong preexisting plan may struggle to complete a competitive application by June 25. However, organizations that do not receive federal funding for planning grants could still apply for implementation grants if they become available in 2011.
- ✓ **Applicants must present strong data and indicators of community need and distress.** Options include using census data, data around the number of students receiving free and reduced lunch in the district, or data around the number of Title I schools in the district.

### Other Resources:

The Finance Project has an extensive body of information and resources to help leaders finance and sustain effective *programs* that support the positive development of youth, and develop *systems* that provide an infrastructure to help coordinate and guide investments in youth.

Visit The Finance Project's [Youth Programs Resource Center](#) for tools and resources on financing, and sustaining youth programs. For more information on how to [Find Federal Funding](#) see The Finance Projects online database, which highlights over 100 federal funding sources that can support youth programs.

*The Finance Project does not give grants or provide funding for projects. We provide leaders with the information, tools, advice, and training to identify financing strategies that fit their needs and to build their capacity to successfully sustain programs over time.*

