

OSG grantees are deeply appreciative of the unique opportunity afforded them to focus on infrastructure issues and for the support to conduct the actual work of organizational development. Grantees are realizing significant progress toward their original objectives, report very few outstanding needs, and are excited to share the models and lessons emerging from their work with the larger domestic violence field.

The OSG component is designed to contribute to a stronger network of DV service providers by supporting the capacity-building efforts of a core group of DV organizations that can serve as models for the field. Grantees' projects addressed a range of capacity-building topic areas, including some of those suggested in the RFP, as well as some of those identified as priorities by Blue Shield Against Violence.

Based on a review of project objectives, OSG grantees can also be categorized into the following groups: regional and collaborative-based efforts; shared leadership models and organizational transition; technology, data systems, and communications; and staff development and volunteer programs. Grantees employed a variety of strategies in these areas, including creating formal consortia, researching governance models, developing software/data systems, and improving volunteer training opportunities.

Progress to Date

Only three grantees reported *significant* delays to their project timelines. Leadership transitions and staff turnover have played the largest role in project delays. The most often cited accelerators of project progress were the critical content expertise and project management skills of consultants. Four grantees cited the technical assistance and ongoing support provided by Women's Foundation of California as an accelerator of progress.

Emerging Outcomes

As a group, OSG grantees have made progress not only toward their own project objectives, but also toward the outcomes anticipated for the OSG component of the Strong Field Project. Through their applications and CCAT scores, grantees have *articulated areas for improvement and concrete plans for addressing those areas*. Grantees are clearly *employing creative models and solutions for addressing identified challenges*, and have made progress toward improved internal systems. Grantees have also *acquired individual-level skills and knowledge* in various content areas, with clear

implications for organizational strength. Grantees have also realized progress with regard to *developing new partnerships that contribute to organizational strength and capacity*, particularly those grantees engaged in regional and collaborative-based efforts. It is too early to fully assess progress toward the OSG outcome of *measurable improvements in organizational strength*.

A detailed examination of emerging outcomes and associated lessons reveals that OSG grantees *as a whole* have realized a substantial amount of progress and gained important insights in the implementation of their projects. Some of the most critical organizational-level outcomes so far have less to do with *products*, and more to do with **ongoing cultural shifts and development of new operating models**: *cultural shifts* about the value and use of quantitative data, the role of volunteers, and staff feedback and involvement in decision making; and *models* for collective resource-development, shared leadership, integrating domestic violence and child abuse services, and integrating community organizing into social services. While the models in particular have not been fully implemented, their scope and novelty hold significant promise for informing the larger field. On the individual level, grantees have realized gains in a variety of skills and knowledge areas—most notably **financial management and leadership/staff management**.

While all grantees had some lessons to share, organizations engaged in regional and collaborative-based efforts generated the most insights into the challenges and successes of implementation—ranging from the critical qualifications of a collaborative leader, to the effect of available DV funding on collaboratives' success.

Grantees are genuinely excited not only at the prospect of *sharing*, but also at the prospect of *learning* from one another. Although grantees clearly have models and experiences from their organizational development work that they are eager to share, they are concerned that the *mechanism* for sharing is not clear. Grantees are not sure how their lessons will be diffused to the broader field effectively and with minimal burden to their own capacity. A majority of OSG grantees do not feel a part of a specifically defined learning community that would facilitate peer exchange.

Implications Moving Forward

Key implications for OSG moving forward include the following:

- **Revisit stated funding priorities for OSG proposals**, as there are differences between the *suggested* areas of project focus in the initial OSG RFP, and the identified needs for the DV field as identified by BSCF in older documents. BSCF and the Women’s Foundation of California may wish to confirm their current priority areas, and the extent to which they are suggested versus required areas in the next OSG RFP.
- **Revisit criteria and practices for selecting next OSG cohort.** Grantees praised the first cohort’s diversity, though there were specific suggestions with regard to: (1) geography (increased representation of Central and Southern California organizations); (2) populations served (increased representation of organizations serving African American and marginalized communities); (3) peer learning partners (funding more projects that are similar to one another); (4) funding priorities (being clear about these to applicants); and (5) grantee orientation (holding an initial session for applicants that explains the big picture of SFP and how its parts are interconnected). SPR also recommends probing applicants more about their plans for project leadership to ensure that while they *involve* the executive director to demonstrate full buy-in, they do not rely on her for primary implementation responsibilities.
- **Consider having a kickoff meeting that reaches more staff from each grantee and provides a type of “Organizational Development 101.”** In order to facilitate broader and deeper-level engagement from grantee organizations, and perhaps to mitigate the effects of potential turnover, Women’s Foundation of California might consider holding a kickoff meeting that involves multiple types and levels of staff from each organization, provides a basic training on how to think about organizational strengthening, and how to apply an

organizational development lens to their work.

- **Roll out an ongoing learning-community plan.** Grantees are eager to engage with and learn from their peers on an ongoing basis. What is needed is a clearer sense of what components and mechanisms make up the OSG learning community (e.g., types of meetings, schedule of webinars, email list with learning topics and discussion board, etc.). Peer training opportunities, as opposed to those provided by consultants, would be a highly prized feature of the learning community, as would coverage of “hot topics” such as evaluation, resource development, and policy/advocacy. Grantees also crave specific assistance on formulating effective plans for sharing their models and lessons with the broader field. Toward this end, Women’s Foundation of California may want to consider hosting a webinar with grantees to discuss field-building, as well as holding telephone conversations with grantees to develop more individualized plans.

This memo makes clear that OSG grantees are on an exciting trajectory of progress. While not all have realized fully measurable improvements in organizational strength, nearly all have bolstered their capacity in critical ways—through increased knowledge, improved systems and practices, augmented resources, and shifts in organizational culture and frameworks. By working individually with grantees on the translation and dissemination of their models and experiences, Women’s Foundation of California and Blue Shield of California Foundation can help realize the original vision of the Strong Field Project and ensure that OSG grantees are not the only beneficiaries of this unique organizational development opportunity.