

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 added \$50 million to the existing Compassion Capitol fund. This initiative has been named the **Strengthening Communities Fund (SCF)**. Today, HHS released information about the details of the program and the application process for states and for nonprofit organizations.

SCF is comprised of two programs -- the State Local and Tribal Government Capacity Building Program and the Nonprofit Capacity Building program. Both are competitive grants and **applications are due on July 7**. Administered by the Office of Community Services in the Administration on Children and Families at HHS, the purpose of SCF, according to the program announcement, is to build the capacity of nonprofit organizations, whether secular or Faith based, to address the broad economic recovery issues present in their communities, including helping low-income individuals secure and retain employment, earn higher wages, obtain higher quality jobs, and gain greater access to state and Federal benefits and tax credits, including ARRA benefits.

The State, Local and Tribal Government Capacity Building program will make one-time, two-year awards of up to \$250,000 to state, city, county and Indian/Native American tribal governments. Governments will use these grants to strengthen nonprofit organizations and increase the nonprofits' involvement in projects that help turn our economy around. 48 grants will be awarded. Government offices at the State, local or tribal level or their designees can apply for funding to strengthen or create offices encouraging partnerships with nonprofit faith-based and secular organization. The grant announcement for the SCF State, Local and Tribal Government Capacity Building program can be found online at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2009-ACF-OCS-SN-0092.html>

The Nonprofit Capacity Building program will make one-time, two year awards of up to \$1 million to experienced lead organizations to provide nonprofit organizations -- or project partners -- with capacity building training, technical assistance, and competitive financial assistance. A minimum of 55% of the Federal funds awarded must be provided to project partners through a competitive process. The announcement for the SCF Nonprofit Capacity Building can be found online at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2009-ACF-OCS-SI-0091.html>

Given the quick turnaround time for applications, you may want to inquire in your state if an application will be made for the SCF. This information will also be of great interest to eligible nonprofits in your state.

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