



U.S. PROGRAMS 2015-2018 STRATEGY

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Executive Summary: U.S. Programs 2015-2018 Strategy

In revisiting the United States' approach to "the war on terror," President Obama has emphasized that this nation must remain "an open society." In the coming years, the nation faces profound shifts that threaten this aspiration. These include the expanded influence of the private sector in public affairs, growing economic inequality that reinforces the marginalization of racial and other minorities, increasingly paralyzed government institutions (especially at the federal level), and fundamental challenges to fact-based discourse.

The 2015-2018 U.S. Programs Strategic Plan, which has been approved by the U.S. Programs Advisory Board, sets forth a significant set of objectives and strategies to address these challenges. It builds on the comprehensive reviews undertaken by the U.S. Programs Advisory Board at the request of George Soros in recent years and the refinement of approach and organizational structure U.S. Programs has undertaken in the past two. In addition to the refinement of its substantive goals, the Plan proposes that U.S. Programs continue to expand its close working relationship with the Open Society Policy Center, further our focus on our anchor and core grantees (expected to be approximately 15% of our budget), explore more extensive use of social impact investing and collaboration with international components of the Open Society Foundations, and retain our commitment to balancing strategy with opportunism (reflected in the USP Opportunities Fund which will constitute 20-25% of our budget).

Recognizing that the upcoming four years will include seminal events ranging from the next Presidential election to the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, U.S. Programs will organize our efforts around the following four goals:

A more inclusive and accountable American democracy. Over the next four years, we will enlarge and protect the electorate through reform of voting practices in the post-Shelby era, begin to change campaign finance jurisprudence, preserve how the internet and new media models can further the free flow of information required by a healthy democracy, and take steps, particularly in select localities, to engage citizens in their democracy beyond voting;

A fair criminal justice system. Over the next four years we will continue to reduce mass incarceration and further challenge harsh punishment such as the death penalty and build on promising movements in drug policy reform by promoting a health-centered approach to drug use and addiction;

Full political, economic, and civic participation of communities of color and immigrants. Over the next four years we will work to secure comprehensive immigration reform and aggressive Executive action to end harsh enforcement policies, reduce the racial wealth gap, address barriers to quality educational opportunities for children of color by reforming school discipline policy, and strengthen the field of racial justice by increasing institutional effectiveness and changing the narrative about race in this country;

Equitable economic growth. Over the next four years, we will take our first steps related to this new goal, including supporting localities seeking to create inclusive economic development, continuing our work to understand the implications of technological change on jobs, and providing opportunistic support toward relevant efforts such as those to increase the minimum wage. This new goal offers an opportunity for us to better coordinate our existing work, such as that to promote housing and credit reform and to connect people with criminal records to employment opportunities.

From 2015-2018, U.S. Programs will also focus on two cross-cutting efforts. The first involves a concentrated effort to address distortions in American democracy by seizing the demographic, advocacy, and electoral opportunities presented by the year 2020 in select states. The second builds upon our commitment to local places, recognized in our fifteen-year effort in Baltimore, Maryland, and our recently launched Open Places Initiatives focused in Buffalo, New York, San Diego, California, and Puerto Rico. In addition, the proposed strategy includes the next steps toward refining the operations of U.S. Programs, including further streamlining our grant-making processes, building a work culture that reflects our values, enhancing our capacity to measure the impact of our work, and orienting our fiscal and human resources in ways that enable us to be nimble and opportunistic.

Part One: Overview

MISSION

Our founder has emphasized that an open society is an imperfect one that holds itself open to improvement. This is true of the United States. While the United States has served as a beacon for democracy to many, there are significant and fundamental challenges to the full participation by all who live here in the nation's civic, political, and economic life. As part of a global network of foundations committed to local knowledge and national expertise, U.S. Programs embraces OSF's overall mission and is committed to building a vibrant, democratic, inclusive, and a more just society in the United States. With the understanding that we operate with imperfect knowledge and that we must adjust our approaches as events dictate, U.S. Programs works to address the challenges that place these aspirations at peril and to seize the opportunities for their fulfillment.

CONTEXT/LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

U.S. Programs recognizes that our aspirations of a meaningful, participatory, and inclusive democracy are affected by current fundamental challenges and opportunities, among them:

The increasing private influence over the public sphere, as reflected in the outsized role of money in politics and exacerbated by growing regulatory capture and economic inequality;

The growing challenges to full and effective participation, representation, and debate, illustrated by the perils of hyper-partisan redistricting, voter suppression, increased polarization, and few opportunities for citizen engagement;

The potential significance of the New American Majority even as racial barriers remain highly relevant, demonstrated in the short run by the growing influence of immigrants and over the longer term by the ways in which key conduits for opportunity like schools and civic institutions respond to the nation's growing diversity;

The impact of new technology on democratic practice and the structure of work in the future, the challenges and opportunities presented by "big data" for equal opportunity and justice, including the right to privacy, and the importance of high-quality journalism for a functioning open society;

The rapid growth of a "security state" characterized by the outsized influence and secrecy of the defense and intelligence sector, and its impact on rights at home and abroad;

The contested role and ability of government, which ranges from long-term challenges to its fiscal viability at all levels, to more specific questions about its capacity to effectively deliver services, set the rules of the road in diverse fields, and protect the rule of law, individual rights and liberties; and

The extreme marginalization of certain vulnerable populations, as the impact of excessive incarceration and harsh punishment erodes basic individual rights and challenges long-held notions about upward mobility, redemption, and full participation in American society.

While we may not choose to tackle each of these challenges in our work, awareness of them informs how we understand the context in which we operate and the ways in which these challenges are interrelated. It also enables us to appreciate and support the work of our peers.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The following four goals form the scaffolding of U.S. Programs' work:

1. An American democracy strengthened through greater inclusion, participation and accountability.
2. A fair criminal justice system that uses punishment appropriately, does not rely on incarceration to address issues of poverty, mental illness and drug addiction, and promotes community safety and well-being.
3. Full political, economic, and civic participation of immigrants and communities of color achieved by dismantling the barriers and strengthening the conduits to opportunity.
4. An economy governed by policies at the local and national level that promote equitable growth, high road development, and the just redistribution of resources.

HOW WE ADVANCE OUR WORK

Before setting forth specific objectives and strategies in the next section, we note four points about how we further our objectives as an organization that is primarily a grant making one.

Anchors and Civic Core: We have developed a roster of multi-issue organizations which we view as “anchors” because they are involved in virtually all areas of our concern, they are amongst the largest of our grantees, and we pursue a different relationship with them. We seek to provide them with multi-year, general operating support since they are effectively proxies of ours. We currently have ten anchors and expect that these will comprise between 15-20% of our budget in each of the next four years.¹ In that period, we will assess and, as appropriate, change this set of institutions as our work and external conditions evolve. We also have a small, sharply-focused portfolio of grassroots and multi-issue organizations that we title “civic core.” These reach key constituencies to catalyze nonpartisan political engagement in ways that make significant contributions to the advancement of multiple open society priorities, including expanding democracy, economic opportunity, immigrants' rights, and justice system reform.

USP Opportunities Fund: Even as we set out strategies for the next four years, we are aware that many issues will arise that we cannot anticipate but where an immediate infusion of funds can significantly advance our goals. Building on our successful experience in 2013-2014 with the Reserve Fund (which we are retitling “USP Opportunities Fund”), we will continue to devote 20-25% of our budget to this opportunistic capacity.

An Expanded Tool Kit: In the coming four years, U.S. Programs will expand the tools we use to advance our goals beyond the grant-making, strategic communications, commissioned research, field convenings, and fellowships that have been its historic mainstays.² Based on a process we are undertaking with SEDF, we intend to use social impact investing to support geographic areas we

¹ Our current anchor organizations are: ACLU, Advancement Project, American Constitution Society, Brennan Center for Justice, Center for American Progress, Center for Community Change, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Drug Policy Alliance, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and the NAACP.

² USP anticipates running three fellowship programs from 2015-2018: Justice Fellows, Baltimore Community Fellows, and one to be determined for thinkers on economic growth strategies. The Black Male Achievement Fellowship will spin off with the Campaign for Black Male Achievement at the close of January 2014.

prioritize, initiatives we believe hold promise, and organizations that may prove sustainable. This will be part of a commitment to identify and support new leaders, ideas, and organizations with promise. Finally, we aim to bolster our partnerships, especially with local governments, in part out of recognition that supporting the effectiveness and capacity of government is an important element in reestablishing public trust and understanding in government's role and potential.

Politics: The ability to effectively participate in and influence executive, judicial, and legislative decision-making (as legally permissible) is fundamental to advancing our objectives. This does not mean that we have a partisan orientation but rather an understanding of the ways in which political factors further or hinder the development of policies, programs, and ideas we believe are important. In the coming four years, we will focus on deepening the capacity of individuals, organizations, and communities we care about to engage meaningfully in public sector decisions, including by supporting partnerships with government and certain progressive actors and pipelines to public service. We will continue to expand our relationship with the Open Society Policy Center, and other c4 funders more broadly, noting that OSPC's capacity to make c4 grants will be of even greater significance given the wind-down of Atlantic Philanthropies, the only other major philanthropic entity with significant c4 capacity.

Part Two: Goals and Strategies

GOAL 1: Strengthen the quality of American democracy through greater inclusion, participation and accountability

Strategies:

- A. *Expand electoral and other forms of meaningful civic participation by combatting voter suppression, by reducing the undue influence of money in politics, and by building municipal and civic capacity*
- B. *Support the free flow of high-quality journalism and civic information necessary to an informed and engaged public*
- C. *Protect the internet as an open, trustworthy platform accessible to all, to facilitate flow of information and allow for much-needed transformation of institutions and communities*
- D. *Promote the rule of law, including an independent judiciary, and standards that define the appropriate role and limits of government and corporate power in an open society*

4 -Year Objectives (selected):

- Electorate enlarged by 10 million voters through modernizing voter registration systems and expanding constitutional/legislative protections
- A governing interpretation of the Constitution that allows for sensible regulation of money in politics established in the legal community with growing recognition by the courts.
- Limits on use of, and accountability measures related to, non-battlefield targeted killing, indefinite detention, torture, and mass surveillance
- Protection of the public interest in decisions of Internet governance including net neutrality, ceasing industry consolidation, and broadband build-out

Context

American democracy is threatened. Broad ideological (and geographic) polarization is reflected in a decline in fact-based discourse and deeply divided federal and state government institutions. Fueled by misguided Supreme Court decisions, our public life and politics have been flooded by an excessive influence of wealthy interests acting for their own benefit even as voting by historically marginalized constituencies is challenged. Profit-driven interests dominate the media and communications infrastructure and threaten the potential of the Internet to be a broadly available means of communication, economic opportunity, civic engagement, and information. The Executive branch in the national security context shrouds important policies in secrecy and avoids accountability measures with exhortations that we look forward, not back. Americans are losing trust and confidence in public institutions and engagement and, internationally, the U.S. is losing stature as a model for human rights and the rule of law.

Democracy issues have been at the core of U.S. Programs' mission since its inception. Distinct efforts were united in 2008 under a transparency and integrity banner, with an affiliated campaign on national security and human rights. In 2012, the U.S. Programs Board reaffirmed the value of the transparency and integrity work, even as it pushed us to meaningfully narrow our goals and strategies. Since that time, we limited journalism-related goals (to focus on supporting innovation) and closed down our local transparency work in New Orleans. As reflected in board decisions in 2013, we refined our national security-related strategy to take advantage of specific opportunities to ensure: 1) accountability and adherence to the rule of law in counterterrorism policy with respect to detention, targeted killing, and torture and 2) that civil liberties and equality are not sacrificed in the name of security. Even as we continue our focus on access to the ballot, one area of expansion has involved steps to promote other forms of civic engagement with the public sector, including through our Open Places Initiative as well as OSI-Baltimore, our nascent efforts involving municipal broadband, and our Talking Transition experiment.

The period from 2015-2018 will include two election cycles (including the Presidential race of 2016) which will highlight money in politics and access to the ballot. In addition, the final years of the Obama Administration will offer significant opportunity and challenges for institutionalizing new regimes related to national security, privacy, and surveillance. In addition to our ongoing support for our anchor partners, we are focusing on changing the legal framework for money in politics and expanding our work on voting to include both systems change and rights-related work. We are reconsidering how we focus our strategic approach to federal transparency and also whether to reorient the state fair courts field following a recent portfolio review.

Strategies

- A. Expand electoral and other forms of meaningful civic participation by combatting voter suppression and undue influence of money in politics and building municipal and civic capacity***

With minority rights to participate under attack, and recognizing that a healthy democracy requires broad, meaningful, and inclusive participation in the many forms of debate, deliberation, and decision-making, we will continue our core strategies of expanding participation in voting and further explore non-electoral forms of engagement, such as around transitions in urban governance. These include our substantial efforts in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's *Shelby* decision to develop a coordinated approach to litigation, legislative engagement and field mobilization, addressing money in politics through the foundation initiative to reform Supreme Court jurisprudence, and the effort to develop new

models of civic capacity to effectively influence local government in three sites through our Open Places Initiative. We continue to see the substantial role government plays as a source of social innovation, and cities in particular as laboratories that hold potential for scalable reform.

Tactics:

- Equip those with less voice – including African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, APIA communities, and Middle Eastern, Arab, South Asian, and Muslim Americans – to more effectively influence public policy issues, including those concerning public access to information and voting, internet regulation, criminal justice, and counterterrorism policies
- Broaden the electorate by lowering barriers to voter registration through the various forms of modernization and increased ballot access, while sustaining and expanding the franchise by establishing strong protections against vote suppression, denial, and dilution
- Give more equal weight to the speech of all to influence elections and policymaking, by reducing the undue influence of the few wealthy interests currently dominating America policy through the development and promotion of alternative legal theories that allow regulation of political spending
- Improve effectiveness and participatory capacity of municipal governments, especially in places experiencing demographic shifts or without significant civic capacity

B. Support the free flow of high-quality journalism and civic information necessary to create an informed and engaged public and ensure universal access to the networked public sphere

An open society requires a diverse, independent press that can provide rigorous and accurate reporting to help the public hold government and industry accountable, but the U.S. media landscape is undergoing a profound economic, technological, and cultural transition with both positive and negative effects. Increasing numbers of people are participating meaningfully through new media even as the traditional journalism infrastructures are eroding. This calls for continued investment in nonprofit journalism organizations that are innovating in ways that repair our civic spirit, especially at the local level, and finding new revenue sources. Support for journalism is closely tied with longstanding grant-making on information and media policy, since the Internet is playing an increasingly important role in news delivery. But more broadly, universal broadband and an open Internet are now essential conditions of full and equal participation. They are significant in facilitating the flow of information and can also transform institutions and communities. The Internet can empower greater participation in the democratic process, facilitate high quality healthcare in rural communities, create job opportunities, and modernize our energy grid. Yet, there are problems of access, speed, and cost, most prevalent in low-income communities, as well as numerous threats to policy.

Tactics:

- Pressure key decision-maker FCC to adopt real net neutrality, prevent further industry consolidation, and support broadband build-out (including municipal networks); secure privacy rights and build an international movement to end excessive government surveillance
- Use the White House Commission’s report on the policy and legal implications of big data to address issues of fairness and risks of discrimination
- Build on recommendations of the President’s review group on surveillance and the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board to protect privacy rights and improve accountability of the security sector

- Support emerging noncommercial models of news and information that creatively fill gaps caused by the decline in news media, and specifically see support for innovation and experimentation lead to one or more models of increasingly viable news and information conduits

C. Promote the rule of law, including an independent judiciary, and standards that define the appropriate role and limits of government and corporate power in an open society

In recent years, federal and state governments have failed to fulfill their proper roles through both inaction and overreach. In the civil rights arena, courts have done too little to promote and ensure equality, abdicating their essential role as defender of fundamental rights and freedoms. Congress, beholden to wealthy donors, is unwilling to rein in corporate power and has virtually abandoned its oversight role in checking executive power. And, especially in the national security context, the executive branch's conduct (including past endorsement of torture and current policies of mass surveillance) has not been checked by government oversight or court enforcement of Constitutional and international law standards.

Tactics:

- Develop and promote Constitutional theories that respect individual rights, governmental power to address inequality, and humane justice policies
- Advance reforms that provide for state court independence and allow sufficient resources for broader access to state courts
- Promote transparent rules, new limits on use, privacy protections, and more effective accountability measures with respect to targeted killing outside of battlefield contexts, indefinite detention, and the use of discriminatory or mass surveillance, through judicial, legislative and policy actions.
- Taking advantage of opportunities such as the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and emerging information about CIA torture and detention practices, develop and promote a new public narrative against torture, indefinite detention, and overdependence on the use of military force (shifting away from the current war paradigm), accompanied by practical and clear-sighted reform initiatives to prohibit torture, close Guantánamo, and strengthen accountability mechanisms
- Protect whistleblowers who reveal matters of public interest, including official misconduct, through policy change and by ensuring strong legal representation in order to promote accountability when other mechanisms to ensure compliance with the law fail

Categories of Work:

Fields: Security sector reform, judicial system reform, government integrity, political participation of citizens, public interest media

Foundation Initiatives: Drones policy, campaign finance jurisprudence

Shared Frameworks: Post-2015 Millennium Development Goals; Drones policy may become a shared framework in 2014

Anchors: American Constitution Society, ACLU, the Advancement Project, Brennan Center for Justice

Cores: Government Accountability Project, Demos, Lawyers' Committee on Civil Rights under Law, Project on Government Oversight, Center for Public Integrity, Human Rights First, National Security Archive Fund

Goal 2: A fair criminal justice system that uses punishment appropriately, does not rely on incarceration to address issues of poverty, mental illness and drug addiction, and promotes community safety and well-being.

Strategies:

- A. *Reduce incarcerated populations through targeted investments in jurisdictions well positioned for reform, support of key grantees working nationally and in states, and reduction of recidivism*
- B. *Challenge extreme punishment through efforts to repeal the death penalty, challenge life without parole sentences, and raise the age of criminal prosecution in key states.*
- C. *Promote justice system accountability by challenging discriminatory policing*
- D. *Reform drug policy through support of alternatives and a health-centered approach to drug use and addiction, and support a core of organizations working to challenge the existing framework*

4-year objectives (selected):

- Reduced incarceration by a level substantial enough such that that by the end of the period, our overall and longer-term goal of reducing incarcerated populations by 50% is reasonable
- Reduced use and application of death penalty through abolition in selected states and overall reduction by addressing targeted areas of high use
- Reduced punitive response to drug use through large-scale policy reform to incorporate a health-based response to drugs in mainstream health and justice system policies at the federal level and in selected state and local jurisdictions, including a strengthened and broadened field of actors who adopt this framework and an expanded model of community-based diversion practices
- Expanded social safety net for those involved in the criminal justice system, including expanded medical insurance through Medicaid enrollment and diminished barriers to employment and education

Context

Decades of increasingly punitive criminal justice policies have resulted in unprecedented levels of incarceration, making the United States by far the leading jailer among democratic societies. There are over two million citizens in our jails and prisons, another five million people under parole or probation supervision and countless millions affected by aggressive policing practices. This expansive use of the criminal justice apparatus—which we refer to as mass incarceration—falls disproportionately on people of color and individuals of low income, perpetuating historic patterns of racial discrimination and class control, stigmatizing individuals with criminal records that impede their ability to fully participate in society long after their official punishment has ended, and destroying the social fabric and economic stability of entire communities. And, the expansion of the reach of law enforcement and punitive practices into the realms of immigration and national security policy, issues of equal importance to U.S. Programs, raises new challenges and concerns.

Increasingly, policy makers across the political spectrum acknowledge that these excesses are fiscally unsustainable and counter-productive to promoting community safety and family integration. Combatting the country’s current punitive mindset and comfort with extremely long sentences for more serious offenses has, however, proved to be particularly difficult. Openness to dealing less harshly with drug offenses, in particular, presents the opportunity to address our concerns about the misuse of the justice system to address drug addiction. The Obama administration has recently been more vocal on

these issues, further raising their visibility in the national discourse. And, the passage of national healthcare reform presents a tremendous opportunity to build the infrastructure and capacity to address drug addiction and mental health issues largely outside of the criminal justice system.

While we have developed active partnerships with a variety of peer funders, such as the Ford Foundation, Public Welfare Foundation and The Atlantic Philanthropies, among others, OSF remains the largest supporter—in terms of total philanthropic dollars—of criminal justice reform advocacy in the U.S.³ Through our Baltimore field office, we engage in activities at the state and local level to advance criminal and juvenile justice reform, and promote the expansion of access to addiction treatment. The justice reform work in Baltimore is intentionally aligned with our national priorities and a number of key grantees are active there. Local work on substance use treatment in Maryland has informed our national strategy.

In 2012, the U.S. Programs board approved the following programmatic priorities for our national work:

- Reduce levels of incarceration, specifically, reduce incarcerated populations 50% by 2023;
- Challenge extreme punishment through continued support of the Campaign to End the Death Penalty by 2025 and efforts to end the prosecution and sentencing of children as adults;
- Promote justice system accountability, with a focus on discriminatory policing and an assessment and refinement of activities related to public defense reform; and
- Reform drug policy, through a series of activities to promote health-based and non-punitive alternatives to current prohibitionist approaches to drug addiction.

We propose in large part that we stay the course approved by the board in 2012 but recommend strategic refinements in the following three areas of our work: targeted state-based investments to advance reduction in incarcerated populations; death penalty abolition; and public defense reform, as more fully set forth below.

Strategies

A. *Reduce Incarcerated Populations*

For 2015-2018, to advance our goal of reducing incarcerated populations 50% by 2023⁴, we will continue to provide field support to key partners working nationally, particularly those that have the capacity to advance reform directly in the states. We will seek to build on growing interest in the field for a more cohesive and impactful national effort to reduce incarceration by supporting activities to promote greater strategic alignment among national organizations and groups working in specific states, as well as addressing gaps in capacity, such as communications and messaging, needed to advance a truly national effort. We will intensify our direct efforts in 3-5 jurisdictions with the goal of achieving a 10% reduction in incarcerated populations in those places. We will continue our efforts to develop New Voices for Ending Mass Incarceration among faith communities and communities of color and expand this work to more explicitly foster demand for reform among crime survivors and victims and law enforcement.

³The Pew Charitable Trusts devote substantial resources to provide direct technical assistance to states seeking to reduce their correctional spending, the Arnold Foundation is focusing on research and technical assistance to jurisdictions to reduce unnecessary pretrial detention, and the MacArthur Foundation expects to receive board approval later this year for new work on front-end systems reform at the local level.

⁴In 2010, for the first time since 1973, state prison populations decreased and have continued to drop (through 2012). However, the aggregate, annual percent reduction over this three year period has been modest, at less than 2%. In 2012, over half the 1.8% reduction to state prison populations were accounted for by the 10% reduction California achieved that year, (where our initiative has played a role). Over the past decade, large reductions in a handful of states have been offset by continued growth in others, and in the federal system.

We will also continue to support efforts to challenge barriers faced by people with criminal records, both to reduce the likelihood of re-incarceration and to expand their capacity for full participation in society, a priority more directly pursued in Baltimore and as part of our Democracy, Equality and Future Economies goals. Further development of our foundation concept to enroll those involved in the criminal justice system in Medicaid will reduce pre-trial detention and return to jail or prison as well by providing access to health services.

OSI-Baltimore's criminal and juvenile justice and drug addiction treatment goals are aligned with these national goals.

Tactics

- Continued support of a Foundation Concept to reduce incarceration in the state of California
- Targeted field investments in select jurisdictions well positioned for reform in the near-term through reduction in incarceration of people convicted of low-level drug and nonviolent offenses⁵
- Maintain investments in key grantees working nationally for sentencing and corrections reform, particularly those with the capacity to directly advance reform in the states, and strengthen collaboration among state-based efforts and national advocacy organizations
- Develop new stakeholders to help end mass incarceration, including faith communities and communities of color, and create significant engagement of law enforcement and crime victims in the efforts
- Sustain support for work challenging barriers to employment for people with criminal records
- Continued support of Foundation Concept to take advantage of Medicaid expansion to enroll criminal justice involved populations for health care coverage in at least five new jurisdictions
- Support community-based alternatives to punitive approaches to drug use and addiction in select new communities

B. Challenge Extreme Punishment

While we have since 2008 been a lead funder of the national campaign to abolish the death penalty, there are a number of dynamics that will likely lead to modifications to the strategy from 2015-2018. We propose targeted investments to maximize the impact of recent U.S. Supreme Court victories limiting the sentencing of children to life without the possibility of parole and to advance state-based reform related to prosecuting children as adults. We will continue to explore opportunities to broaden the discussion about the need to respond differently to young people in conflict with the law.

Tactics

- Continued support of the Campaign to Abolish the Death Penalty with goal of repealing capital punishment in at least two-three states⁶
- Challenge life without parole sentences through targeted investments to support effective resentencing for eligible individuals, to limit negative legislative responses to recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings, and to sustain litigation and policy advocacy activities of core grantees

⁵ This work is in addition to OSI-Baltimore's targeted efforts in Maryland to reduce mass incarceration. We include here our work with OSI-DC to reduce levels of incarceration in the federal system.

⁶ We held a portfolio review of this work at our May board meeting through which we engaged the board on some of the critical questions that these changes present, related to our future investments in this work.

- Sustain national advocacy and technical assistance capacity for state advocates seeking to raise the age of criminal prosecution, with targeted investments in New York and possibly North Carolina

C. Promote Justice System Accountability

Our Foundation Concept to challenge discriminatory policing in New York City, launched in 2012, has been successful to date. We are exploring opportunities to advance police reform beyond New York, including addressing discriminatory practices targeting Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (AMEMSA) communities and racial profiling more generally.⁷

Tactics

- Support field capacity of New York City advocates to engage with the new City administration around implementation of the function of the new Inspector General and the federal court-ordered remedial process through declining investments over the next two years
- Maintain national infrastructure to advance public defense reform through support to a limited number of partners to sustain important recent gains and seize opportunities to support new and creative approaches to reform

D. Drug Policy Reform

U.S. Programs seeks to establish a new paradigm for U.S. drug policy that addresses actual harm to individuals and communities, promotes health and social stability, ensures public safety and justice, and advances equality and the freedoms of an open society. We propose to (1) sustain key organizations in the field, (2) build a health-centered approach to drug abuse, and (3) to establish and scale community-level alternatives to punitive drug policies. This work will take place nationally and through work supported by OSI-Baltimore, which will serve as a local laboratory that will inform our approach elsewhere, as well as benefit from lessons in other jurisdictions.

Tactics:

- Maintain capacity of a select core of organizations to sustain reform efforts in the field and to respond to emerging opportunities
- Take advantage of national health care reform and opportunities to reduce barriers to access by drug users to health care systems and harm reduction services, with the goal of establishing a health-centered approach to drug use and addiction
- Support the development and implementation of alternative, more effective, more efficient and less punitive response to drug use and subsistence-driven drug distribution in 3-5 jurisdictions

Categories of Work

Fields: Criminal Justice Sector Reform, Drug Policy Reform, Security Sector Reform

Concepts: ACA implementation to advance drug policy reform, ACA implementation to expand Medicaid coverage for the incarcerated, California campaign for sentencing and corrections reform, New York City policing accountability, Reduce incarceration in Maryland through revising parole policies/practices, End the automatic prosecution and detention of youth as adults in Maryland;

⁷ OSI-Baltimore will continue to partner with the Baltimore Police Department and non-profit organizations to reduce youth arrests and associated racial disparities. The National Security and Human Rights Campaign will also continue to support directly and indirectly (through a Security and Rights Collaborative fund) the work of AMEMSA communities in New York, along the northern US border, and in other parts of the country, to push back against racial, religious, and national origin profiling in the counterterrorism context.

Shared Frameworks: Fostering a New Era in Drug Policy, the 2016 United Nations Special Session on drugs

Anchors: ACLU, Drug Policy Alliance, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Brennan Center for Justice, Center for Community Change, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, NAACP

Cores: Equal Justice Initiative; The Sentencing Project; Southern Center for Human Rights; Juvenile Law Center; Council of State Governments; Campaign for Youth Justice

Goal 3: Promote full political, economic, social, and civic participation for immigrants and communities of color by eliminating the systemic barriers that perpetuate inequality and increasing access to the structural conduits for opportunity.

Strategies

- A. *Reduce the racial wealth gap by increasing access to fair and responsible financial services and quality housing for low-income immigrants and communities of color*
- B. *Expand and protect the rights of immigrants by securing pathways to citizenship through federal immigration reform and curtailing harsh immigration enforcement policies*
- C. *Strengthen the racial justice field by increasing institutional effectiveness, changing public discourse, and building political will, and*
- D. *Address barriers to quality educational opportunities for communities of color, including specifically through ongoing initiative related to school discipline*

4-year objectives (selected):

- Reduced racial wealth gap
- Secured comprehensive federal immigration reform and advanced state-level policies that reflect immigrant interests, including preventing anti-immigrant policies and fostering stronger field that includes recognition of immigrant growth
- The Campaign for Black Male Achievement is established as an independent, national leader, there is improved institutional effectiveness of national racial justice organizations and field, and widespread usage of a 21st century racial narrative
- Measurable progress by 2018 toward five-year goal of 25% reduction in suspension, expulsions, and arrests

Context

The U.S. will not fully realize its potential as a vibrant, democratic, and inclusive society if it fails to afford its immigrants and communities of color equal access to the full economic, political, educational, and social opportunity structures that define success.

Racial justice has been and remains a core value of U.S. Programs. The translation of this value into practice has incorporated long-term investments (e.g., George Soros' creation of the \$50 million Emma Lazarus fund in 1997 onward), opportunistic responses (e.g. the Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative, which started as a strategy to address the foreclosure crisis) and work to place racial justice issues on the national agenda (e.g., the Campaign for Black Male Achievement). The core value of racial and ethnic justice is not just represented in this goal area: it infuses all of U.S. Programs' work. For example, even though voting rights, counterterrorism policy, or criminal justice reform are not listed in this goal, our approach to all of these stem from our central belief in the ways that racial bias infuses structures in U.S. society today.

One of the dynamics in this area of work over the past several years has been that the portfolio and approach were diverse without a coherent theory or focus. Recognizing that there is still more work to do, the following attempts to tighten and organize our work. We are no longer funding low-wage worker rights unless it is specifically through an immigrant lens and we have chosen to discontinue our foreclosure prevention work by terminating funding to the Neighborhood Stabilization initiative. We are no longer supporting gender- or LGBT-focused grants that do not also recognize the intersectionality of race. As we have focused more explicitly on immigration reform, we have tied off support for naturalization, citizenship, and immigrant integration work.

Strategies

A. Reduce the racial wealth gap by increasing access to fair and responsible financial services, and quality housing for low-income immigrants and communities of color⁸

Failing to address the racial wealth gap not only limits opportunities for communities of color, it also inhibits economic growth for the nation as a whole. The Great Recession of 2007-2009 devastated the wealth of immigrants and communities of color and exacerbated existing disparities⁹: from 2004 to 2010, whites lost one percent of their wealth, while blacks lost 23% and Hispanics lost 25%.¹⁰ As a result of these trends, African Americans and Latinos are more likely to be unemployed, earn significantly less income, and have 18 to 20 times fewer assets than their white counterparts.¹¹ Moreover, even though non-urban areas of the country are becoming increasingly diverse, housing patterns continue to limit opportunity for our communities of focus. Over three quarters of those places of extreme poverty (greater than 40% below the poverty line) are disproportionately communities of color, and one out of every five people living in one of these communities was born outside of the United States.¹² There is a strong negative correlation between this racial and economic segregation and economic mobility.¹³ To reduce the racial wealth gap, we must reduce the number of people of color and recent immigrants who live in high-poverty segregated communities.

Tactics

- Address public policies that reinforce existing patterns of racial and ethnic segregation and limit family mobility, including those related to anticipated regulations requiring that recipients of federal housing funds take steps to maximize opportunity for communities of color
- Increase access to responsible credit for communities of color and recent immigrants, and ensure that lack of financial services is not a barrier for immigrants to achieve citizenship or legal status
- Advance state and federal policies that expand 21st century family-supportive wage work opportunities for black males and single parent households headed by women of color

⁸ For context, the gap has remained relatively constant over time. A 20% decrease in the gap would essentially require doubling average African-American wealth in four years, assuming white wealth remained stable. Even 10% reduction in the disparity would require unprecedented increases in minority wealth over a short period of time.

⁹ In 2009, the median wealth of white families in the U.S. was \$113,149, compared with \$6,325 for Latino families and \$5,677 for black families. Rakesh, Kochar, *Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs Between Whites, Blacks, Hispanics*, Pew Research Center (July 2011). The Great Recession exacerbated this disparity: from 2004 to 2010, whites lost 1 percent of their wealth, while blacks lost 23 percent and Hispanics lost 25 percent.

¹⁰ Urban Institute, *The Racial Wealth Gap Is Not Improving*, <http://www.urban.org/changing-wealth-americans/lost-generations-interactive-race.cfm> html (accessed April 29, 2014).

¹¹ Federal Reserve Board, 2007 Survey of Consumer Finances, "Full Public Data Set" (Washington: The Federal Reserve Board, 2009), <http://www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/oss/oss2/2007/scf2007data.html> (accessed March 4, 2009).

¹² Erica Meade, *Overview of Community Characteristics in Areas with Concentrated Poverty*, Department of Health and Human Services (April 2014) at p. 4.

¹³ Chetty, et al., *Where is the Land of Opportunity? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the US*, Harvard Geography of Opportunity Project, (January 2014).

B. Expand and protect the rights of immigrants by securing pathways to citizenship through federal immigration reform and curtailing harsh immigration enforcement policies

According to estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. immigrant population stood at almost 40.8 million, or 13% of the total U.S. population. According to Department of Homeland Security's Office of Immigration Statistics, an estimated 11.5 million unauthorized immigrants resided in the United States in January 2011. We will continue our efforts to empower immigrant communities and ensure their full political and civic participation.

Tactics

- Promote federal reform, in conjunction with OSPC, through policy advocacy, communications, grassroots advocacy, and field building to increase the capacity of immigrants' policy advocacy capacity
- Curtail racial profiling and "criminalization" of immigrants and people of color by state and local law enforcement and federal enforcement policies that use national security as pretext for discriminatory enforcement¹⁴
- Secure proactive state-level protections for immigrants, in conjunction with OSPC
- Ensure the full implementation of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policies that immediately improve the lives of immigrants and strengthen the infrastructure needed for future immigration reform efforts

C. Strengthen the racial justice field by increasing institutional effectiveness, changing public discourse, and building political will

While the contours of inequality have transformed, much of the traditional civil rights infrastructure and the racial justice field has not, causing a generational disconnect and decreasing the change capacity of communities of color. In part, this must be addressed by strengthening and helping evolve existing organizations and by cultivating the next generation of leadership. For U.S. Programs, there is a particular opportunity based on the inflection point that has arisen with President Obama's embrace of the boys and men of color frame (even as we seek to retain focus on African-American males). Beyond this, part of the challenge is to develop and share a new narrative regarding race and ethnicity in the new America of the 21st century.

Tactics

- Strengthen racial justice organizations through technical assistance and enhanced focus on capacity, cultivating next generation of racial justice leadership, and enhanced engagement with others potentially involved in shared efforts (e.g., organized labor and groups working in Muslim, Arab and South Asian communities to combat Islamophobia)
- Successfully institutionalize Campaign for Black Male Achievement (by 2018, OSF funding should be no more than 1/3) and leverage policy and program reform specifically related to boys and men of color possible due to My Brothers' Keeper Initiative
- Develop and advance a narrative that acknowledges the country's racial and ethnic realities and is effective in the 21st century by commissioning research, partnering with high-profile influencers, and engaging media

¹⁴ The National Security and Human Rights Campaign will contribute to this effort, through funding of Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian communities in New York, along the northern US border, and in California, as well as one or two other states to be determined.

D. Address barriers to quality educational opportunities for communities of color, including specifically through ongoing initiative related to school discipline

Emerging from the insight that high stakes testing increasingly used throughout U.S. public school systems provides perverse incentives for the exclusion of boys and young men of color, U. S. Programs has for several years invested (with Atlantic Philanthropies) in a multi-faceted campaign to address inappropriate and unnecessary school suspension policies and practices. The effort has resulted in increasing attention on the issue among a broad range of key players (national teachers unions, juvenile justice leaders, judges, the federal government) with several places, including Baltimore and the State of Maryland, serving as models for good practice. In the upcoming four years, we believe this effort can transform the practice nationally, and we have a plan by which by 2018 over half of public school children should be educated in systems in which school discipline policies, accompanied by supports for teachers and students, should promote, not hinder, educational engagement. The plan prioritizes comprehensive reform in six states (Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas) and scales these changes with additional institutional reforms on the federal level and through other national actors.

Tactics

- Take next steps in coordinated school discipline campaign, aligned with Atlantic Philanthropies, that furthers local and state-level policy and practice reform and strengthens federal policy to address problematic disciplinary practices and support appropriate ones
- Increase awareness of effective alternatives to suspension among key stakeholders, especially state and local policymakers, teachers' unions, judges, and the general public

Categories of Work

Fields: Access to Economic Opportunity, Equal Access to Quality Primary & Secondary Education, Migrant & Immigrant Rights, Rights of Ethnic, Racial & Religious Minorities, Arts & Culture for Social Change, Improving Technological Skills of Activists, Political Participation of Citizens, Youth Engagement for Social Change, Arts & Culture for Social Change, Security Sector Reform

Concepts: School discipline pushout, Long-Term Idea Generation

Anchors: ACLU, Advancement Project, Brennan Center for Justice, Center for Community Change, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, American Constitution Society, Leadership Conference Education Fund, NAACP

Cores: Color of Change, National Association of Latino Elected Officials, PICO National Network, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Opportunity Agenda, Center for Social Inclusion, National Council of La Raza, The Kirwan Institute, Asian Americans Advancing Justice

Goal 4: An economy governed by policies at the local and national level that promote equitable growth, high-road development and the just redistribution of resources

Strategies:

- Increase the capacity of localities to create high-road approaches to economic development and policy that result in higher employment and fairer distribution of municipal revenue*
- Advance longer-term efforts to promote policies that recognize the shifting nature of jobs and work*
- Provide opportunistic support of campaigns that will advance economic equity and improve lives in the immediate term, such as raises in the minimum wage*

- D. *Advance progressive taxation at the state level, such as targeted revenue increases and expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit to childless workers, and influence federal debates on raising revenue and closing corporate tax loopholes*

Context

This proposed economic goal is a new one for U.S. Programs, and its addition reflects four assumptions: 1) jobs matter and thus we need both local inclusive growth strategies that create family-supporting opportunities for the communities we care about right now and longer-term approaches that acknowledge the potentially disruptive dynamics posed to work as we know it by technological change; 2) that the growing gap in income and wealth/assets compromises open society values (and other core areas of our work) by diminishing the ability of all residents to enjoy full economic, political, and civic participation, and that increasing concentration of economic and political power is intimately intertwined and visible on all of our issues; 3) that our central partners within the U.S. Programs network already engage heavily in economic issues and we can make more of an impact by better incorporating and engaging economic issues with our other priorities which are inextricably linked, and that we have access to enormous expertise within the OSF network; and that 4) mindful of the broad trends, there are actions we can take that are important and can make a measurable impact on both lives and policy in the short- and long-term.

Since the U.S. Programs Board convened a working group on economic equity under co-chairs Deepak Bhargava, Geoffrey Canada, and Bill Vandenberg more than two years ago, U.S. Programs has engaged in questions regarding how to pursue work in this arena. At that time, the group concluded that economic inequality was a driving issue affecting all other issues that U.S. Programs sought to tackle, but that we “lacked a cohesive strategy that is unified across USP.” The Board saw value in continuing support of research institutions through our anchor and core portfolios, reaffirmed support for housing and fiscal equity advocacy, and recommended embarking upon more future-oriented inquiries that could represent a niche for U.S. Programs going forward.

The 2015-2018 Strategy addresses the questions posed by the Board about scope, impact, and the way to think about U.S. Programs’ participation in a crowded philanthropic and organizational field through:

- a focus on local economies that heeds the Board’s call to focus on executive and community-based work (both advocacy and program development) to advance changes that might set the stage for broader developments even during a period of partisan gridlock
- the incubation of longer-term strategies that address the changing future of work and the potentially transformative impact of technological change on jobs
- the continuation of support for actors who have and continue to play leading roles in current economic policy and practice debates, especially to ensure commitment to our communities of focus, including through opportunistic support on pressing issues

Collectively, USP invests nearly \$15 million a year in activities or grantees that have some orientation toward economic issues, but the lack of an explicit focus means we have not coordinated our work well nor been well-positioned to join with philanthropic and other partners around strategy or deploy our Opportunities Fund on pressing matters.¹⁵ It also means that we are not applying new tools in the OSF arsenal, such as social impact investing, fellowships, and technical assistance to governments, in ways

¹⁵ OSF’s closest present-day economic advocacy and research partnerships are with the Bauman, Ford, and Stoneman foundations on fiscal policy and with Ford and Rockefeller on emerging future of work interests. On equitable economic development, there is the potential for significant partnership with the Ford, Surdna, and Nathan Cummings Foundations and SEIU.

that might strengthen the fields and places in which we work. U.S. Programs has significant relationships and partnerships to draw upon: INET, several anchor grantees (CBPP and CAP), our growing relationships with progressive labor, local efforts developing through our Open Places Initiative and Campaign for Black Male Achievement/My Brother's Keeper Initiative.

The four initial strategies presented here will be fleshed out further over the remainder of 2014 through conversations with our partners in the network and in the field, further research and convenings if necessary, and dialogue with the board. We will articulate objectives for 2015-2018, as the other goals have, by the end of the calendar year. Ultimately, in addition to these new approaches, we believe that the adoption of the larger goal and areas of focus will enable us to strengthen our existing efforts, such as the ways in which economic efforts can and should promote employment opportunities for those returning from prison, and develop better ways to further our core values, whether through local efforts to realize "high-road economic strategies" or public policy shifts needed to ensure our communities of focus are adequately advanced.

Strategies

A. Increase the capacity of localities to create high-road approaches to economic development and policy that result in higher employment and fairer distribution of municipal revenue

Three factors combine to compel U.S. Programs to turn to local economies as a level of intervention. The first is that the national paralysis around the economy means that one of the few places for real impact by shifts in policy and opportunity is at the local level. Secondly, we have learned already from the experiences of the Open Places Initiative sites, where cities such as Buffalo and San Diego are looking for new models to generate, attract, and invest revenue while protecting the quality of life and working conditions of residents and their families. Finally, we fear an increasing divide into tiers where larger cities with greater financial and civic infrastructure and capacity become laboratories for economic policy and development models, and others are bereft of additional investment and attention from national foundations and organizations. We are also aware of the increased attention that the 2013 elections of mayors including de Blasio and Walsh has placed on urban efforts to address inequality.

The following preliminary tactics are indications of future direction, to be refined over the remainder of 2014.

- Support increased capacity in localities to generate equitable economic growth models and policies, with a particular interest in southern and southwestern places where we have been less active at the local level
- New investments in intermediary organizations that develop ideas to strengthen local economies and advance alternative models for economic development, potentially including new ways to partner with or advance ideas for local governments (e.g., Future Local Economies Fellows)
- Introduction of new tools to support economic development including impact investing and fellowships

B. Advance longer-term efforts to promote policies that recognize the shifting nature of jobs and work

Building off our existing inquiry into the Future of Work, we will develop and promote policies and practices that acknowledge the potential significant changes in what work will be and what it will mean in the future. Among the core questions that will drive the development of specific programs and policies are the following:

- Which specific emerging technologies and their use could significantly impact the jobs, types of work, and structure of work on which advocates for our communities of concern are relying to improve and grow?
- What is the range of likely possibilities for how the relationship between employees and employers will transform given the use of emerging technologies?
- What models in business, policy, and community life could alleviate the negative impact and increase the positive impact of the way work and jobs will transform given the use of emerging technologies?

In developing our strategies going forward, two core principles involve (1) ensuring that attention to our communities of focus is integrated into the broader research and policy development agendas, and (2) we take full advantage of the diverse array of actors engaged in the “future of work” inquiries (both those within our network and those outside). This strategy may lend itself less to a traditional grant making portfolio and more to the seeding of pilot programs and models and the support of ongoing new thinking.

C. Provide opportunistic support of campaigns that will provide opportunities for family-supporting job opportunities for our communities of interest, including people with criminal records, young boys and men of color, communities of color and immigrants

While we do not see U.S. Programs developing a permanent funding area to support organizing and advocacy around low-wage work, where our research indicates that several large institutional funders are well-represented, we do want to provide support where there are opportunities for victories that would immediately improve lives while advancing the larger policy debate nationally. These requests would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis out of the Opportunities Fund.

D. Change policy on the state level on progressive taxation and revenue distribution, such as targeted revenue increases and expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit to childless workers, and influence federal debates on raising revenue and closing corporate tax loopholes

Tactics:

- Support state-based advances on progressive taxation and revenue distribution via continued investment in the State Priorities Partnership (aka State Fiscal Analysis Initiative), the state-based complement to the federal focus of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, an anchor grantee
- Maintain sharply focused investments in narrative and messaging work that provides strategic communications support to federal and state level advocates leading campaigns to raise revenues, an area where, historically, progressives have lost consistently over the past two decades
- Provide targeted field support to increase engagement on federal and state level revenue increases from small business and faith-based leaders

Categories of Work

Fields: Access to economic opportunity, campaign finance jurisprudence, political participation of citizens, criminal justice sector reform

Concepts: Open Places Initiative

Anchors: Center for Community Change, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Center for American Progress

Cores: Center for Working Families, PICO National Network, National Council of La Raza, Roosevelt Institute, Center for Responsible Lending, Economic Policy Institute, National Employment Law Project

Part Three: Internal Shared Frameworks and Initiatives

For the period of 2015-2018, U.S. Programs will look to create “internal shared frameworks” that capture areas of interest for USP on efforts that are timely and around which there are several programs and new initiatives operating.

2020 and Distortions in American Democracy:

Taking up the challenge presented by George Soros’s memo on distortions in democracy,¹⁶ USP is developing an internal shared framework to align our work in a number of areas with the goal of securing fundamental reform by the year 2020, when the next census and redistricting process will take place in conjunction with a seminal election. This work will extend beyond an election-only emphasis to include the development of new political and community leadership and on-the-ground civic capacity.

The 2020 Project is intended to connect the interests of nearly all programs, from voting rights to immigrant political engagement to confronting prison-based gerrymandering to the development of civic capacity through the Civic Core and local Open Places efforts, among others. The project will feature significant consultation and engagement with our anchor and core grantees, Democracy Alliance partners and other donors, and field leaders, such as Planned Parenthood, progressive labor, and other allies.

Beginning in 2015 with initial investments, U.S. Programs anticipates seeking to have national impact by and in 2020, through targeted work in a small number of states. States such as Arizona, Georgia, or North Carolina, are quickly changing demographically and rising in political significance. They are often where the most compelling opportunities to confront distortions in democracy exist. New U.S. Programs investments would complement existing work on voting rights, voting systems reforms, and money in politics and, in a small number of states, our options, in conjunction with OSPC, could include:

- Changing redistricting processes to create fair redistricting policies that ensure diversity in elected representation, lead to more competitive congressional and legislative elections, and challenge prison gerrymandering
- Securing a more “complete count” in the decennial census, targeting census outreach in metropolitan areas with the largest numbers of people who are likely to be undercounted, including undocumented immigrants, very low-income people, and formerly incarcerated persons
- Increasing rates of voter participation from constituencies that comprise the so-called Rising American Electorate and that may be underrepresented in voter turnout relative to population share, including Latino, African American, Asian American, and youth communities
- Enhancing leadership pipelines to grow the number of open society leaders, elected or otherwise, from the Rising American Electorate

¹⁶ George Soros, *US Strategy* (August 16, 2013)

- Building the capacity of community-based organizations to catalyze political engagement throughout the year and not solely around elections

The project would begin in 2015 and likely run through 2022, when the first elections under newly redistricted seats would occur. U.S. Programs board and staff are currently working to identify big ideas and develop a concise strategic focus to propose for the board’s future consideration.

Places:

While U.S. Programs is a national foundation working toward a vision for the United States, we believe that we should also concentrate on the role of specific (local) places in advancing our broader priorities. The commitment to establishing a Baltimore field office in 1997 was the result of George Soros’ desire to understand the political, social and economic dynamics, including the impact of national policies, in urban centers. U.S. Programs chose to establish a field office in Baltimore precisely because of the recognition of the complexity of achieving change in a federalist society.¹⁷

The Open Places Initiative (OPI) launched formally in 2013 is similarly dedicated to providing a platform for the transformation of local places by supporting enhanced civic capacity over the long term.

U.S. Programs has also engaged in significant local grant making as we have invested in the local applications of national strategies such as in the areas of policing reform (New York City), transparency and government accountability (New Orleans), ending mass incarceration (California), journalism (Wisconsin), and civic engagement (North Carolina). Sometimes we have invested in one place through multiple avenues, such as New Orleans or New York City, which comes with its own set of consequences, including the potential for both larger scale change than had been imagined and false expectations of ongoing support.

For the 2015-2018 strategy, U.S. Programs will advance its work regarding “places” by experimenting further with efforts to:

- Develop a new portfolio designed to improve the capacity of local government actors to advance policy and program in areas of core concern to U.S. Programs, and to invest in a meaningful pipeline of new voices into government
- Establish a new tranche of place-based investments building upon our experience with the Open Places Initiative that focuses more intentionally on portions of the United States that are experiencing demographic shifts but may lack civic capacity (e.g., the South and Southwest)
- Make opportunistic investments at the local level where there are key moments to advance our priorities, particular in localities where there is under-investment

Part Four: Operational Strategy

We recognize in this plan that a successful operations strategy is essential if we wish to accomplish our programmatic goals. To that end, the 2015-2018 operations strategy will be guided by the following objectives:

¹⁷ In the early years, OSI-Baltimore’s criminal justice, urban debate league and community justice programs related to national USP initiatives as well as local priorities, but its other programs—workforce & economic development, drug addiction treatment, and education & youth development—responded solely to local and state imperatives.

- Support and cultivate the skills of staff and create a work culture that is positive, respectful, challenging and reflective, and that embodies the values that drive us as an institution
- Support the work of programmatic staff through the creation of more efficient grant making processes, including decentralization of grant making authority, and enhanced access to resources for professional development
- Enhance our capacity to measure the impact of our work by strengthening our evaluation capacities
- Provide strategic communications support to program staff initiating foundation concepts, improve the capacity of our grantees, and improve the capacity of program staff to evaluate the communications capacity and effectiveness of their grantees
- Create an operations structure that accomplishes the above goals, that can respond to new opportunities and challenges and that works to distribute human and fiscal resources in ways that advance our mission

To accomplish the above, we have begun to orient our fiscal and human resources appropriately. We have recently hired a Director of Operations; intend to strengthen our communications team by bringing on a Senior Communications Officer and Office to help with external and internal communications and to support program staff in their work with grantees; and, will strengthen our relationship with the Grant Making Support and Strategy Units while rethinking what kind of capacity we need within U.S. Programs to most effectively support our grant making processes, portfolio reviews, and evaluate our impact.

APPENDIX A: FIELDS AND FOUNDATION INITIATIVES OF U.S. PROGRAMS, AND SHARED FRAMEWORKS IN WHICH THE U.S. PARTICIPATES

FIELDS:

We seek to identify strong and trusted partners within each of these fields who share our values and our aspirations. We recognize the critical perspectives and insights these groups bring to advancing work in each of these fields, and believe that their experience and expertise position them to identify the actions that need to be taken to advance our shared goals.

U.S. Programs supports the following Open Society Foundations fields: access to economic opportunity, challenging the health establishment to advance human rights, combating xenophobia and racism, equal access to quality primary and secondary education, human rights monitoring and documentation, migrant and immigrant rights, civic reform infrastructure, drug policy reform, government integrity, security sector reform, criminal justice sector reform, judicial system reform, political participation of citizens, and public interest media.

FOUNDATION INITIATIVES

School Push-Out: Ensure strength and coordination of field of educational reform, juvenile justice, and civil rights advocacy groups devoted to combating school push-out policies by increasing networking and rapid response communications capacity.

Campaign for Black Male Achievement: Recognizing the failure of past philanthropic efforts to provide enduring support for the field of black male achievement, CBMA exercises leadership in mobilizing donors and field partners to establish new anchor institutions and resource hubs to ensure that the black male achievement field is sustained beyond OSF's initial investment.

The California Campaign for Sentencing and Correctional Reform: Developed to reduce incarceration in the state of California through a campaign designed to take advantage of the opportunity in the state to reduce prison populations created by the combined pressures of the financial crisis, a federal court order, and strong public sentiment that the justice system is broken.

ACA Implementation to expand Medicaid Coverage for the Incarcerated: Seeks to use the expansion of Medicaid in the states to encourage jurisdictions to develop policies and practice to enroll into for Medicaid coverage individuals with some level of justice system involvement, with the ultimate goal of reducing future contact with the justice system.

ACA Implementation to Advance Drug Policy Reform: Across U.S. Programs, we seek to take the fullest possible advantage of national health care reform and the opportunities it provides to reduce barriers to access by drug users to health care systems and harm reduction services, with the goal of establishing a health centered approach to drug use and addiction.

OSI-Baltimore is also taking advantage of the Affordable Care Act to close the addiction treatment gap in three ways: 1) working with key departments of the State of Maryland to enroll prisoners in Medicaid so that, upon their release, they will be enrolled in health care insurance (Medicaid), almost always for the first time; 2) ensuring that certain modalities of treatment effective for treating heroin and other opiate addiction is made widely available; and 3) through a program related investment (a loan guarantee), we are supporting one of the 27 non-profit CO-OPs (Consumer Operated and Oriented Plan

Programs) established by the federal Department of Health and Human Services under the Affordable Care Act to ensure that health care is, in fact, affordable to low-income people who earn too much to be eligible for Medicaid.

The New York City Police Accountability Campaign: Designed to build on the growing public concern about excessive stop and frisk practices to force a series of policy and practice changes to reduce discriminatory policing and promote greater public engagement and accountability.

End the automatic prosecution of youth as adults in Maryland: In 2009, OSI-Baltimore launched a multi-year campaign to end state officials' practice of automatically prosecuting youth as adults for certain crimes and housing them in adult jails pretrial. By supporting research, youth organizing, advocacy, and communications strategies, OSI-Baltimore and its grantees have contributed to the reduction of the youth population at the Baltimore City adult jail from over 100 in 2009 to less than 40 in 2013. This year, OSI's grantees successfully advocated for a change in state policy that will allow more youth to have their cases transferred to the juvenile justice system.

Reduce the prison population in Maryland through reform of parole policies and practices: For over a decade, OSI-Baltimore has partnered with the Maryland Parole Commission and the national non-profit JFA-Institute to revise, implement and monitor new parole guideline to increase the number of people who could be released on parole. This work has contributed to an increase in the number of people who are granted parole from 25% to 40%. Additionally, these parole releases have contributed to a 10% reduction in the prison population.

Drones: The NSHR Campaign is contributing to a foundation led concept on drones policy, which may become a shared framework this year. The overarching goal is to promote greater accountability to civil society and to decrease resort to the use of lethal drones outside of battlefield contexts.

Money in politics: Given how Supreme Court doctrine has constrained the ability to address the undue influence of money in politics, we have developed and are now implementing a multi-year campaign to challenge and transform existing campaign finance jurisprudence. To achieve this goal, OSF and its allies will engage in work to develop and disseminate new thinking about the Constitution in the campaign finance area, bring cases to test and adopt new theories, reshape the composition of the Federal courts, and engage Americans in advocating for a Constitutional interpretation that promotes a diversity of voices in political debates and decision making. This effort entails coordinated efforts to use idea generation, communications, litigation, policy advocacy, public education, and organizing.

The Open Places Initiative: Grows out of the realization that the ability of communities to respond to the challenges of devolution, shifting demographics, and Congressional infighting requires increased civic capacity, especially for efforts that attempt to further the full inclusion of those with low incomes, people of color, and other marginalized communities in civic, economic, and political life. By investing in collaborations among nonprofit organizations and by supporting their partnerships with government, business, and community, we aim to expand the potential of select local places (cities and regions) to pursue effective responses to the profound demographic, economic, and technological changes that are taking place throughout the country in order to increase equality, justice, and democratic practice. As part of the new initiative, we have awarded collaborations of organizations in Buffalo, San Diego, and Puerto Rico \$1.9 million each over two years, with the understanding that we will invest in these municipalities for at least three years and up to ten years. Our long-time commitment to these sites

reflects our assessment that building new civic capacity—new relationships, skills and resources—will take time.

SHARED FRAMEWORKS

Shared frameworks are projects with high-priority goals and a limited time frame to which multiple OSF programs and foundations contribute their own programming. A shared framework allows multiple programs and foundations to reconceive a complex problem in a new way—one that would not yield to the efforts of any one program or foundation. U.S. Programs contributes to three projects on the shared frameworks track, indications of our growing interest in collaborating across the OSF network.

Post-2015 MDG's (Approved)

The report of the High Level Panel on Post-2015 Development Goals represents a high-water mark in process leading to the General Assembly's adoption of new development goals in late 2015, and gives us an opportunity now to begin to pursue the goals most closely aligned with Open Society's objectives—on safety, justice, and governance—on the ground in several countries. Our aim would be to demonstrate that these ambitious goals set by the High Level Panel are measurable and achievable, making their inclusion in the final General Assembly resolution more likely and, regardless of the outcome of the debates at the UN, galvanizing domestic and international commitments to pursue them. U.S. Programs' country plan aims to demonstrate how indicators on homicide reduction, with a focus on black men and boys in cities; citizen participation in governance; and, access to justice would strengthen the work in these areas on the ground and the ultimate success of policy or programmatic interventions.

Drones (see foundation led concepts for description)

This concept is scheduled for a charrette in July 2014.

Fostering a New Era in Drug Policy - the 2016 United Nations Special Session on Drugs

As the 2001 AIDS UNGASS was a focal point for coalescing international will towards providing access to HIV treatment, the 2016 United Nations Special Session on drugs (the "Special Session") represents a unique and transformational inflection point for nations of the world to articulate —individually and in unison— the harms of the current global drug policy regime, and to imagine and describe alternative policies that reflect Open Society principles of democracy, human rights, respect for the rule of law, public health, and the dignity of individuals. OSF's aim would be to leverage the resources and prestige of the Open Society Foundations to mobilize an international movement that would have the momentum and force to effect substantive change in global drug policy. There is now evidence that the long-held consensus supporting current drug policies (the "war on drugs") is beginning to crack. These policies have led to a widespread global public health crisis of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C epidemics, mass incarceration, organized criminal violence, environmental degradation, and draconian law enforcement measures —including the death penalty— for drug offences. These impacts have been disproportionately experienced by the most marginalized groups in society, including the world's poorest individuals and minorities. A strategic effort across the regions and programs represented by OSF targeted at the Special Session, however, has the potential to tip the balance in the drug policy debate in the right direction and lead to substantive change at the international level.