



Strengthening
nonprofits and
the communities
they serve.

Sharing a mission of change

Stronger Nonprofits Initiative (SNI)

Frequently Asked Questions

Illinois

333 South Wabash Ave.
28th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
312 629 0060

Indiana

202 East Market St.
The Platform
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317 454 8530

Michigan

3011 West Grand Blvd.
Suite 1715
Detroit, MI 48202
313 309 7825

Missouri

911 Washington Ave.
Suite 203
St. Louis, MO 63101
314 588 8840

Wisconsin

215 North Water St.
Suite 225
Milwaukee, WI 53202
414 563 1100

What is SNI?

Stronger Nonprofits Initiative (SNI), presented by IFF, is an intensive 14-month program that provides nonprofits led by people of color with the resources necessary to empower decision making and navigate barriers to accessing capital and real estate opportunity. These resources include, but are not limited to: fiscal management skills development, one on one fiscal management coaching, facilities management coaching, and a small subsidy that can be used for real estate projects or technical assistance. Additionally, SNI seeks to improve interaction with influential networks, including a network of funders focused on improving equitable access to capital resources, as well as a network of peer nonprofit leaders of color who can support leadership growth.

Who is eligible to participate in SNI?

Any nonprofit that has 501(c)(3) status; a full-time, paid CEO/Executive Director who is ideally a person of color; as well as at least 1 other member of the leadership team participating in the program who is a person of color. Applicants must be headquartered in the city where the training is taking place.

How much does it cost to participate in SNI?

The program is FREE, made possible through the generous support of [JPMorgan Chase & Co. Corporate Responsibility](#).

Who facilitates the program?

IFF will conduct two workshops and one-on-one real estate coaching. Additionally, we will host events throughout the program. IFF delivers the program in partnership with [BDO FMA](#) (formerly FMA) who will deliver eleven fiscal management workshops, peer learning opportunities, and ad-hoc sessions as well as one-on-one fiscal management coaching throughout the span of the initiative.

What is the application process?

The application opened March 15, 2021 and must be submitted using the online portal at www.StrongerNonprofits.org. Applications are due by **5pm CST on Wednesday, April 21, 2021**. Throughout March and April, IFF will host information sessions. More details can be found at www.strongernonprofits.org. The SNI St. Louis Cohort will be announced on May 18, 2021, and the weekly sessions will begin on June 8, 2021.

What documents or materials are needed for the application?

Please have the following documents ready when completing your application. Note, you will be able to save your application and come back to complete it at any time:

- Organizational chart
- Most recently completed audit; financial review or 990
- Current year budget
- Most recent annual budget versus actuals (and projections through the end of the year, if available)

The application will also include a section with short narrative questions. The purpose of these questions is to learn more about your organization's goals, history, and demographics. We recommend that you save a copy of your completed application for your records.

What is the time commitment of SNI?

We ask that 3-4 members of the leadership team be ready and willing to actively participate in the 14-month long program starting in June 2021. The program will include the following virtual workshops and peer learning sessions:

- Weekly 2-hour virtual workshops beginning in June 2021 through August 2022. Two additional ad-hoc workshops will be scheduled at a later date.
- Individual bimonthly financial management coaching sessions.
- Individualized real estate consultation services.
- Development of a financial management action plan for implementation.
- Special events connecting the cohort to funders, capital resources, and other supportive networks will be scheduled throughout the program.

What do you mean by “people of color”?

The SNI program began out of recognition that people of color leading nonprofit organizations face additional structural barriers to accessing capital resources. For the purposes of this program, “people of color” is defined as individuals who self-identify as Black/African American, African, Latina/o, Asian, Arab or Native American.

Can Board members participate?

Yes! While it can be beneficial to have Board members participate in the program, please keep in mind that the majority of the financial management content will be geared towards the roles of leadership staff around finance management. In the event that you would like a Board member to participate, please make sure they are able to dedicate the time needed to participate in all of the workshops, training, and other meetings.

I understand the program addresses issues related to real estate planning and facilities management. Does my organization have to own our building in order to participate?

No, owning your building is not necessary. The program will discuss some of the benefits and challenges of owning vs. leasing, and how to leverage your facility as a financial asset regardless of ownership.

How does the program help strengthen fiscal management skills?

Throughout the program, you will participate in a series of team-based financial workshops and peer learning opportunities focused on building your organization's fiscal management skills, with a focus on understanding your financial story, strengthening your financial planning and performance management practices, and building effective and efficient fiscal operations. Additionally, you will receive one-on-one fiscal management coaching support from BDO FMA over the span of the initiative, which will be tailored to your needs. You will have the opportunity to outline a 12-month action plan to work toward your fiscal goals with the ongoing support of your peers and individualized coaching sessions.

We're a small organization. Do you have to have a specific budget size in order to apply?

No, there is not a mandatory budget size for participating in SNI. However, since the program is a considerable time commitment, smaller organizations should consider whether staff will be able to dedicate the necessary time to the program.

Our organization doesn't have a person of color on our leadership team. Can we still apply?

SNI is intended to support organizations led by people of color. This is because we know from research (both statistical and anecdotal) that these organizations face additional structural barriers to accessing capital resources. We recognize that every organization's leadership structure is different. We encourage all organizations considering applying to SNI to think deeply about who does or does not have decision making power within their organizations, particularly where it comes to making decisions about the organization's finances (both where they come from and where they are utilized). A "leader" in your organization may be an executive, a Board member, a program manager, or sit somewhere else within your organization.

My organization is in need of lending services. Does participating in SNI mean I am automatically approved for a loan?

No. Any organization in need of financing, must still go through IFF's standard loan application processes. However, there will be opportunities to speak with IFF's local lending team regarding your borrowing needs and the loan application process.

Will the real estate subsidy we receive through SNI be enough to cover an entire construction project?

Real estate project budgets vary greatly depending on what services you require. The real estate subsidy provided through SNI can be used to obtain one-on-one real estate coaching to prepare for a project and provide real estate technical assistance for organizations who are executing a real estate project. These funds are not available to pay for construction or other third party project costs.

What should I do if I still have questions?

You can learn more about the program, upcoming information sessions, and the application process at www.strongernonprofits.org. Additionally, you can email us at strongernonprofits@iff.org.