

# LISTEN for GOOD

Advancing the practice of feedback loops in the social sector

An initiative of *Fund for Shared Insight*

## Listen for Good 2017 Request for Proposals: What You Need to Know

### Overview

Listen for Good (L4G) is an initiative dedicated to building the practice of listening to the people we seek to help.<sup>1</sup> We invite nonprofits and funders to join us in exploring a simple but systematic and rigorous way of getting feedback from the people at the heart of our work. Listen for Good is focused on applying a semi-standard survey instrument, which includes using the [Net Promoter System<sup>SM</sup> \(NPS<sup>®</sup>\)](#) employed widely in customer feedback circles, to the nonprofit beneficiary context.<sup>2</sup> Organizations implementing L4G are all customer-facing nonprofits. In 2016, we made 46 L4G grants supported by 28 nominating co-funders.

2017 grantees of L4G will receive \$45,000 over two years (\$30,000 from Fund for Shared Insight and \$15,000 from a nominating co-funder), as well as access to technical assistance to guide their implementation efforts. The core feedback tool is simple, consisting of six standard questions\* that all participating L4G organizations are required to ask:

- ▶ 1. How likely is it that you would recommend [...] to a friend or family member?
- ▶ 2. What is [...] good at?
- ▶ 3. What could [...] do better?
- ▶ 4. How much of a positive difference has [...] made in your life?
- ▶ 5. Overall, how well has [...] met your needs?
- ▶ 6. How often do staff at [...] treat you with respect?

*\*These questions may change slightly (though not significantly) in 2017. ©2015 SurveyMonkey.*

In addition, organizations can ask four optional demographic questions and add up to five custom questions to their survey.

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<sup>1</sup> People use a variety of terms to describe the people we seek to help, including “beneficiaries,” “clients,” “ultimate constituents”, and “ultimate intended constituents.” For the purpose of mutual understanding in this proposal, we will primarily use the phrase “the people we seek to help” – recognizing that we don’t always reach the people we want to help.

The quantitative and qualitative responses to the L4G survey are gathered using a variety of data collection methods — including kiosks, tablets, paper surveys, and in-person interviews — and in multiple languages, when appropriate. Our survey-platform provider, SurveyMonkey, provides benchmarks to compare organizations’ responses to those of organizations in similar issue areas. Through our high-quality technical assistance, we help organizations step-by-step with collecting, interpreting, and responding to feedback.

We look forward to sharing what we learn as we continue to scale this effort, reaching more co-funders and customer-facing nonprofits across the country and supporting them as they listen for good.

## Purpose of Listen for Good

With the Listen for Good initiative, Fund for Shared Insight aims to:

- ▶ **Support** diverse, customer-facing nonprofits to initiate or improve their practice of systematically collecting and using feedback from the people they seek to help. By “diverse”, we mean nonprofits of many budget sizes, issue areas, populations served, and geographies. By “the people we seek to help”, we mean individuals whose voices are least heard. For example, these might be families visiting food pantries, youth attending afterschool academic and enrichment programs, residents living in public housing, recent immigrants using legal-aid services, or individuals participating in job-training programs.
- ▶ **Accelerate** the building of infrastructure needed for strong beneficiary feedback loops in the social sector, including technology, analytics, reporting, and access to tools and benchmarks.
- ▶ **Experiment and learn** about applying/adapting the Net Promoter System to the beneficiary feedback context – including determining what survey questions work best for organizations and building out benchmarks in key issue areas (e.g. food insecurity, community and economic development, health).
- ▶ **Engage** more funders in supporting, using, and valuing beneficiary feedback by structuring Listen for Good as a co-funding/matching grant opportunity.
- ▶ **Capture and share** lessons learned with grantees, co-funders, and the field to positively catalyze the feedback movement and inform the work going forward.

## How to Participate (Nonprofits)

We are thrilled to announce we are offering up to 75 Listen for Good grants in 2017.

**In order to apply to participate in Listen for Good, a nonprofit must be nominated by a current funder (existing or new).** If the nonprofit(s) a funder nominates is selected to participate in L4G, the nominating funder will contribute \$15,000 of the \$45,000 grant total for each nonprofit selected.\* Selected grantees will receive a \$45,000 grant over two years: \$30,000 paid the first year and \$15,000 the second year.

We will accept proposals from funder-nominated nonprofits until **Friday, May 26, 2017 at 11:59pm Pacific Time**. There will be several informational webinars offered to answer applicants' questions. Participation in these webinars is optional and will not influence funding decisions.

For more information about Listen for Good, including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents, see [Proposal and Related Documents](#). We will post updates to the FAQs, so please check back regularly.

\*Grantees that are nominated by [Shared Insight Core Funders](#) are fully funded by the core funder.

## How to Participate (Funders)

In order to engage more funders in supporting beneficiary feedback efforts and using client feedback data to inform their work, L4G is structured as a co-funding opportunity. Funders can nominate existing grantee(s) and commit to contributing \$15,000 of the \$45,000 grant total for each nonprofit selected. Funders may nominate as many grantees as they wish, but we encourage funders to prioritize organizations that want to collect feedback from the people they seek to help whose voices are least heard. The grantees should also *want* to participate and have the capacity to do so.

To nominate a grantee(s) or learn more, please email Lindsay Louie, Project Director, Listen for Good, at [llouie@hewlett.org](mailto:llouie@hewlett.org). For more information about Listen for Good, including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents, see [Proposal and Related Documents](#). We will post updates to the FAQs, so please check back regularly.

## Proposal Selection Criteria

We will assess proposals received in response to the request for proposals based on the criteria below.

Importantly, this grant opportunity is open to nonprofits located anywhere in the 50 United States serving domestic beneficiaries and working in any issue area, as long as the effort is customer-facing. Nonprofits need not have experience collecting feedback from the people they seek to help in order to apply, but they do need to demonstrate a commitment to collecting and using beneficiary feedback going forward.

### Threshold Criteria

- Applicants must be nominated by a current or new funder who supports their participation, and who agrees to contribute \$15,000 to Fund for Shared Insight's Listen for Good initiative in support of the grant.
- Applicants must be a U.S.-based, 501(c)(3) public charity whose work is focused domestically. Its beneficiaries for this initiative must reside in the 50 United States.

- Applicants must have a minimum annual budget of \$500,000 in the current (2017) and previous (2016) fiscal years.
- Applicants must serve a minimum of 100 unique beneficiaries annually, and have intentions to survey a minimum of 50 respondents at minimum two times per year.
- Applicants must serve, and plan to implement feedback loops with, clients whose voices are least heard. For example, these might be families visiting food pantries, youth attending afterschool academic and enrichment programs, residents living in public housing, recent immigrants using legal-aid services, or individuals participating in job-training programs. (Please see FAQs for more detail on what this does — and doesn't— mean.)

## **Additional Selection Criteria and Expectations**

- Organization demonstrates commitment to design and implementation of high-quality beneficiary feedback loops, defined as:
  - Data are collected regularly (at least 2x/year, ideally more often);
  - Response rate over the course of the year is substantial (targeting 60-80%);
  - Data are used to inform organizational practice (and ideally lead to programmatic changes); and
  - Staff close the loop with those who provided feedback (how this is done will vary by organization).
- Organization embraces use of the standardized question set and data collection via the SurveyMonkey platform; participation in technical-assistance offerings provided through L4G; contribution of anonymized data to benchmarks; and sharing data and lessons with Shared Insight and its nominating funder.
- Organization's leadership team demonstrates commitment to engaging in the downstream activities associated with implementing high-quality feedback loops, including:
  - Using the data for ongoing improvement
  - Communicating and advocating the value of beneficiary feedback to staff and other stakeholders
  - Dealing with hard situations that could arise from receiving or responding to feedback
  - Closing the loop with beneficiaries
- Organization has sufficient capacity to execute on the proposal and to participate in Listen for Good technical-assistance sessions (group and individual) and Fund for Shared Insight's evaluation of the project.
- Organization can collect data in English, Spanish, Chinese (traditional characters), or Vietnamese. If organizations wish to collect data in other languages, they must manually enter data into a pre-programmed survey in one of the above four languages on SurveyMonkey.

If you have questions that aren't answered in this document or the accompanying FAQs, please email Michelle Mengel, Program Manager, Fund for Shared Insight, at [michelle@fundforsharedinsight.org](mailto:michelle@fundforsharedinsight.org).