



General Service Foundation Open Call for Letters of Interest to Advisor Community for Partners

August 2021

Who We Are:

General Service Foundation (GSF) seeks to amplify the visions and voices of leaders who are advancing a bold vision for a just world. GSF takes a holistic approach to supporting organizations that contribute to a broad, sustainable, intersectional movement for justice. Within this movement, we are committed to providing resources to work led by communities most impacted by injustice because they have the deepest wisdom about the changes that are needed.

GSF prioritizes support for organizations that advance racial, gender and economic justice. We are particularly interested in supporting strategies that include visionary organizing, alliance-building, cultural and narrative work, and/or leadership development efforts.

GSF is a family foundation founded in 1946 by Margaret and Clifton Musser from Iowa with family wealth generated by timber and other industries. CR Musser was troubled by chaotic conditions in the world but hopeful that the Foundation would do some good for humanity. Knowing he couldn't see 50 years ahead, he gave our founding board freedom to undertake whatever work they believed was important. He counseled them to respond to changing conditions, admit mistakes, keep their expectations realistic, and enjoy solving problems together.

Over seven decades, we have followed this advice while working toward a just and sustainable world. Our board membership now represents the third, fourth and fifth generations of the family, as well as non-family trustees who come from the social justice sector. Our history shows a pattern of focusing on the pivotal causes of the day. In the 1940s and '50s, we were working on industrial and race relations. In the early '60s, reproductive health became a priority, followed by the environment and peace. GSF's grantmaking now is centered on support for organizations building power and advancing racial, gender and economic justice. In practice, this evolution reveals a unified belief that justice connects many issues and true power is sustained by mobilizing people on the ground.

We are now exploring how to more deeply align our investments with our values and mission.

Where We Are: Evolution of GSF's Investment Approach

GSF's current endowment of approximately \$80 million has grown primarily from investment returns over the life of the Foundation. The Foundation's investment approach has also evolved from the standard 60/40 mix of equity and fixed income to a strategic asset allocation across a broader range of asset classes. Thirteen years ago, we began exploring impact investing by dedicating 10% of the endowment to this approach. These impact investments now account for approximately 32% of the

endowment and have been primarily in environmentally-themed funds. Over the past five years, GSF's investment performance has averaged 10% per year, with some volatility. These investment returns have supported the Foundation's mission through its grantmaking with recent annual payouts ranging between 6.8% and 10%. GSF currently works with two advisors - one for the impact investments and another for the balance of the endowment. In May 2021, GSF's Board decided to move all of our assets into impact investments that align with our mission, and we are seeking a new advisor who will support our efforts to align 100% of our investments with our mission and values.

GSF's investment committee works using a non-discretionary consulting model as a means to learn more about investments and to partner with the advisors and staff. The investment function was originally the sole responsibility of the trustees but has now evolved into a shared model where the trustees work with staff and external advisors. The board retains full fiduciary responsibility for the investments. This governance is expected to continue in the future. The existing structure has led to good financial returns and created an opportunity for the board to learn about new investments and approaches. The current advisors have balanced quantitative rigor with the need to make the investment process accessible to the board.

GSF's values and mission will drive the impact investing advisor search and the field building goals of this project.

The Partner We Are Seeking:

The Foundation is seeking to work with a single new advisor going forward who can partner with us to fully integrate our investments with our racial, gender and economic justice mission. We are ready to take action while appreciating that the transition to 100% mission alignment is a long-term commitment and will require a true partner.

Key Advisor Attributes and Qualifications:

- Innovative leader in the impact investing field;
- Knowledgeable practitioner in impact measurement and management;
- Analytical thinker with creativity;
- Open and clear communicator with board and staff; and
- Teacher and learner along with board and staff.

Our Field Building Goals:

In addition to the selection of a new advisor, GSF would like to leverage our own search process, by conducting an open search process, and sharing the results with other foundations that are on a similar journey to align their investments with their values. Our goal is an investment advisor field that is more inclusive, equitable and concerned with justice. We will share the knowledge generated from the field building questions with our peers in philanthropy as well as in the investment advisory industry. Our goal is to incentivize advisors to participate in this Open Call for Partners and to also provide the field with a snapshot of the current impact investing advisor landscape and possibilities.

Process and Schedule:

We encourage advisors from a broad range of firms to respond to this Open Call for Letters of Interest to Advisor Community for Partners. All advisors who respond to the questions will be acknowledged in our

field building report that will be completed after the advisor search. Your responses to the questions about your organizational capacity will not be shared but will be used to select a group of candidate firms to receive a more detailed RFP for our advisor search later this year. All respondents will also be informed about the ultimate results of our advisor search even if they are not among the finalists.

We have retained [Godeke Consulting](#) to help execute the Open Call for Partners and ultimately the Request for Proposal for a new advisor. We have structured the Open Call for Partners with two types of questions: Advisor Capacity Questions and Questions to the Field.

We highly value your participation in this process and the time you spend on your responses. We hope this will provide an opportunity for advisors to share their honest experiences in mission-aligned investing through racial, gender and economic justice lenses and learn about the state of the field.

Robin Snidow
Board Chair

Dimple Abichandani
Executive Director

RESPONSES, TIMELINE AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

Responses:

GSF encourages advisors from a broad range of firms to respond to this Open Call for Letters of Interest to Advisor Community for Partners. All advisors who respond to the questions will be acknowledged in our field building report that will be completed after the advisor search. Your responses to the questions about your organizational capacity will not be shared but will be used to select a group of candidate firms to receive a more detailed RFP for their advisor search later this year. All respondents will also be informed about the ultimate results of their advisor search even if they are not among the finalists.

All responses should be submitted via the following link: [Survey Monkey](#). When answering the questions, please respond in clear, succinct and jargon-free language, following the requested word limits. Please keep your total submission to 10 pages or less.

Technical Note: All of the survey responses are required which means you will need to fill out each page sequentially. We suggest having all information ready before filling out the survey and filling out the survey in one sitting. Your answers are saved when you advance to the next page or submit the application. You are able to edit your application until the Open Call period closes on September 8 (even if it's been submitted). Simply access the survey link with the same computer and same browser.

Timeline:

- Launch of Open Call for Letters of Interest to Advisor Community for Partners: August 2, 2021
- Close of Open Call for Letters of Interest to Advisor Community for Partners: September 8, 2021
- Launch of invitation-only Request for Proposal for an Impact Investment Advisor: Late fall 2021

Contact:

If you would like to submit your responses via another format, please contact **Steven Godeke** at steve@godekeconsulting.com.

Thank you!

QUESTIONS TO ADVISORY COMMUNITY:**Respondent Contact Information**

- Firm Name
- Primary contact person's information
 - Contact Person's Name
 - Contact Person's Title
 - Firm's Mailing Address
 - City/Town
 - State/Province
 - Zip/Postal Code
 - Email Address
 - Phone Number

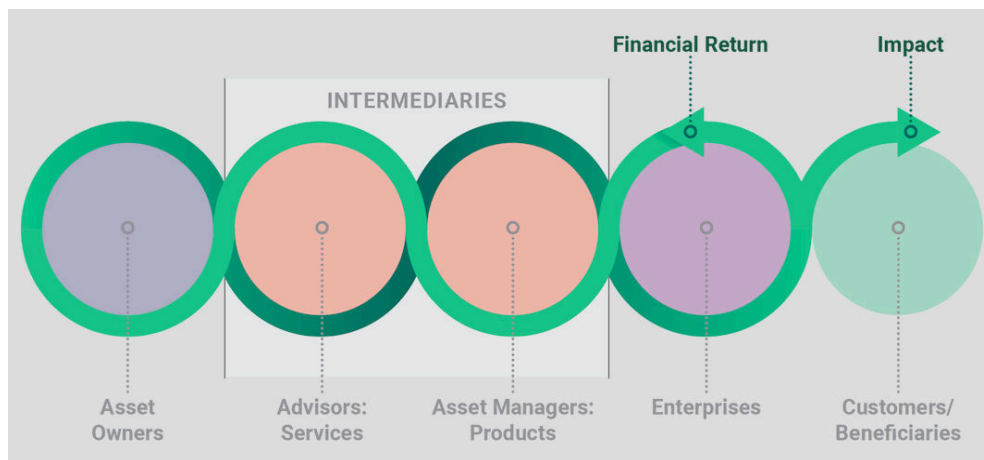
Advisor Capacity Questions:

- Tell us about your firm, team and typical clients. Please include your assets under management (AUM), ownership structure of your firm and diversity data for your firm. (Requested word limit: 500 words)
- Describe your mix of clients and how you work with them. What is your mix of consulting, non-discretionary and discretionary advisory services? (Requested word limit: 350 words)
- Describe your investment process and how you develop impact investing portfolios for clients including your capabilities across asset classes. Have you worked with any clients with a 100% mission alignment objective? If so, please describe the transition process. (Requested word limit: 500 words)
- Describe your firm's approach to racial, gender and economic equity. What do you see are the challenges and opportunities? How does your analysis drive your decision making? (Requested word limit: 500 words)
- What racial, gender and economic equity networks and initiatives are you involved in? (Requested word limit: 350 words)
- How are you compensated for your work? (Requested word limit: 250 words)

Questions to the Field:

- What concrete actions would you suggest for GSF to align our investments with our racial, gender and economic justice mission? (Requested word limit: 350 words)
- What breakthroughs and barriers have you experienced in your firm’s work to create racial, gender and economic equity across the impact investing capital chain (asset owners, advisors, asset managers, enterprises, and customers/ beneficiaries)? (Requested word limit: 350 words)

Impact Capital Chain



Source: Godeke and Briaud, *The Impact Investing Handbook*, 2020.

- Given that only 1.3% of U.S. investment assets are managed by substantially and majority diverse-owned firms,¹ how is your firm working to address this inequity, and what advice would you give to GSF on how we could help make the investment industry more equitable? (Requested word limit: 500 words)
- How do you work with your clients to measure and manage the impact they create through their investments? (Requested word limit: 350 words)

Additional Information:

- Is there anything else that you'd like to share that would help GSF understand how your work aligns with the Foundation's stated goals? (Requested word limit: 350 words)

Thank you for your interest in working with the General Service Foundation. We'll be in touch in the coming weeks with next steps after the close of the Open Call for Partners.

¹ Professor Josh Lerner, Harvard Business School Bella Research Group, The Knight Foundation, “Diversifying Investments: A Study of Ownership Diversity and Performance in the Asset Management Industry,” 2019.