



OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

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George Soros Offers \$10 Million Challenge Grant to Help OSI Advance Mission of Helping Baltimore's Vulnerable Neighborhoods

Soros and Mayor O'Malley Call on Local Leaders to Raise Additional \$20 Million

Baltimore – Philanthropist George Soros today pledged to give Baltimore \$10 million if the community raises another \$20 million to continue his Open Society Institute's work on drug addiction treatment, school reform, prisoner re-entry and juvenile delinquency.

"I'm very happy with the work the Open Society Institute has done here in Baltimore," Soros said today at a press conference at Baltimore City Hall. "The outstanding programs have had a tremendous impact on Baltimore's neediest neighborhoods. The programs have really helped make Baltimore a more open society that guarantees impartial justice and provides opportunities for people to become self-sufficient."

Soros opened the Baltimore office of the Open Society Institute in 1998 as a laboratory for better understanding and unraveling complex urban problems. Since then, he has given \$50 million to fund an array of programs that tackle some of Baltimore's most difficult problems.

A total of \$30 million would allow OSI-Baltimore to continue its work for five more years. "It would be unfortunate simply to end so many successful programs and cut short their potential to yield lasting change in Baltimore," Soros said.

"OSI's work in Baltimore has made a tremendous difference in the lives of many of Baltimore's most vulnerable residents," said Mayor Martin O'Malley.

OSI-Baltimore Director Diana Morris announced several early gifts from generous individuals and foundations.

- One investor, who prefers to remain anonymous, is giving \$160,000 over two years to support the *Helping Baltimore Youth Succeed* initiative.
- Suzanne Cohen, through the Cohen Opportunity Fund, is making a significant gift over five years to the *Baltimore Community Fellowships* program.
- The Lockhart Vaughan Foundation, a family foundation, is awarding the *Tackling Drug Addiction* initiative \$250,000 over five years.
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation is awarding up to \$1 million over five years to match OSI spending on a 1-to-1 basis in the East Baltimore development zone on OSI's four initiatives.

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“This is a great start,” Morris said. “Raising \$20 million is a significant challenge, of course, but it also an opportunity for us to engage other investors in our work, serving as a catalyst for fundamental change in the city.” Morris said she and OSI-Baltimore would reach out to more individuals, corporations and foundations – both local and national – to raise \$20 million over the next five years.

Over the past seven years, OSI in Baltimore has worked on achieving change in neighborhoods, schools, prisons, workplaces and government by addressing the root causes of chronic problems. Soros’s investment has helped secure an additional \$225 million in public and private funds for drug addiction treatment, education, youth programming, juvenile justice and criminal justice reform, and the Baltimore Community Fellows program. For example, OSI’s technical assistance and grantmaking have helped:

- Establish an urban debate league now in 26 city high schools
- Boost reading achievement for public school students
- Nearly double the number of drug-dependent people receiving treatment
- Cut fatal overdoses to their lowest level in five years
- Fund 70 Community Fellows who have revitalized underserved neighborhoods
- Secure \$25 million for after-school programs for 14,000 students
- Launch a grassroots juvenile justice coalition that effectively publicized abuses at juvenile justice facilities and secure funding for successful community-based alternatives.

“Behind innovative programs throughout the city, you’ll find the Open Society Institute, often working quietly behind-the-scenes,” Mayor O’Malley said.

The mayor commended the institute for its generosity when federal and state dollars are shrinking. “We couldn’t have done many of the things that have taken place over the past seven years without a private partner like OSI,” O’Malley said.

Over the next five years, the Open Society Institute plans to focus on four main areas, building on the accomplishments of the past seven years:

- Helping Baltimore youth succeed by improving academic and supportive programs during and after school
- Treating at least 75 percent or 41,000 of the city’s drug-dependent population and building support for expanded public funding for treatment
- Continuing to support the Community Fellows’ entrepreneurial efforts to revitalize underserved communities
- Expanding programs that help prisoners successfully re-enter society to reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

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The Open Society Institute, a private operating and grantmaking foundation, aims to shape public policy to promote democratic governance, human rights, and economic, legal, and social reform. On a local level, OSI implements a range of initiatives to support the rule of law, education, public health, and independent media. At the same time, OSI works to build alliances across borders and continents on issues such as combating corruption and rights abuses. OSI was created in 1993 by investor and philanthropist George Soros to support his foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Those foundations were established, starting in 1984, to help countries make the transition from communism. OSI has expanded the activities of the Soros foundations network to other areas of the world where the transition to democracy is of particular concern. The Soros foundations network encompasses more than 60 countries, including the United States.