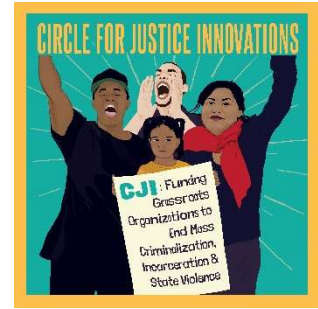


CIRCLE FOR JUSTICE INNOVATIONS

Request for Proposals and 2019 Grant Application Information



CJI is requesting proposals from grassroots organizations working to transform the current U.S. criminal justice system.

This year, CJI will fund groups that are engaged in strategic efforts to build linkages with other sectors of the criminal justice movement.

Background

The Circle for Justice Innovations (CJI), which began in 2000, was born out of a growing concern with prison expansion, mass incarceration, and the impact of racial disparities on oppressed and marginalized communities. The CJI Circle is an innovative grant-making panel comprised of donors, donor-activists, and community organizers, some of whom have experienced incarceration. We share authority and a passion for supporting meaningful, transformative and systemic change of the criminal legal system. Understanding the limited funding available for progressive criminal justice organizing, this Circle was launched as a means of creating a new source of support for this critical work. CJI's mission is to end mass criminalization and mass incarceration in the United States.

Each year, we raise the grant-making funds, convene the Circle for political education, and determine our grant-making focus. The Circle then agrees on the RFP focus. We reconvene to evaluate proposals and make grant decisions. Given this process, there is currently no recurring annual deadline or guarantee of multi-year funding for CJI applicants. However, there is also no maximum number of grants an organization can receive from CJI.

The application process is online **and does not require an invitation to apply**.

CJI's 2019 Funding Priorities

The present moment in history places our movement at a critical juncture. Activists and commentators alike have introduced a wealth of policy proposals. Some would be effective, others ineffective, still others insidious and harmful. CJI believes that formerly incarcerated movement leaders and their organizations, working at the grassroots and drawing from experience, must be at the forefront of determining the policies that will move us forward. The movement must also push back against the emergence of tools of repression, however disguised.

This year, CJI will support movement-building organizing that is based in awareness of the current environment and includes all who are affected by the criminal legal system, regardless of the type of detention they face or the charges against them. CJI supports work that embraces the following tenets:

- Pretrial detention should not be determined by money or racist risk assessments.
- Profit-driven e-carceration tactics that extend punishment in the name of reform are not the answer.
- Moving people from prisons to jails where they will bear the burdens of fewer programs or opportunities to see their loved ones is not the answer.
- Proposals to release incarcerated people who should not have been imprisoned in the first place, yet do not prevent future incarceration on the same grounds, are not the answer.
- New sentencing legislation that purports to be reform must be retroactive in its application.
- Release from incarceration must include assistance with housing, employment, and the services that allow for full integration of full human beings.
- Our activism and energy should promote restorative justice, alternatives to incarceration, decarceration and an end to mass criminalization and state violence.

CJI defines movement building as: An ongoing collaboration, both within and across communities, intended to eradicate core systems of injustice. Collaborations may include those among grassroots or community organizations and/or between grassroots/community organizations, and people or groups working with transparency and integrity inside the institutions they seek to transform.

General Funding Criteria

CJI will ONLY fund the following:

- Organizations with a demonstrated commitment to including the leadership of people who have been incarcerated (defined as confinement in prison, jail, immigrant, juvenile or military detention, or deportation facility), and/or others who have been directly impacted by the system, including family members of incarcerated people.
- Organizations committed to achieving systems change through organizing, including changes in policies or institutions, such as parole, probation or other systems of control.
- Organizations with budgets of \$550,000 or less. If you are under the umbrella of a larger organization, please define your relationship with that organization.
- While we fund new and previous grantees, CJI will ONLY consider previous grantees that have provided a CJI Progress Report with information about their most-recent CJI-funded work.

CJI Funding Preferences:

- Groups that operate in difficult political environments, e.g. in the **presence** of hostile campaigns, antagonistic public figures, or repressive laws;
- Groups that develop new leaders, especially from people who are marginalized within their own community, e.g. poor people, homeless people, young people, elders, queer and trans people, formerly incarcerated people, people with mental illness, people with disabilities, people in rural areas. Leadership development may also include healing or personal transformation work, especially within communities that have endured generations of violence and trauma, and who may be currently enduring state violence;
- Work that addresses discrimination or abuse against people who have been incarcerated or detained, including discrimination in housing, employment, education, voting and parental rights;

- Work being done in the South, Indian country on reservations, rancheros, pueblos, missions, villages, etc. and other rural areas;
- Organizations with a membership base, and an identifiable decision-making process for constituents/members/ or communities;
- Groups that engage in **innovative** collaborations, building alliances among organizations with diverse backgrounds and common interests. Strong collaborations may include groups with geographic and demographic diversity (such as race, class, income, immigration status, ability & disability, gender & gender identity, sexual orientation, and age), as well as varying experience with incarceration, or detention.
- CJI may fund organizations that provide culturally appropriate healing/inner transformational programs that are connected to the criminal justice movement. We believe that healing is important to develop leadership among those most impacted by the criminal legal system, and to disrupt the cycle of incarceration.

Funding Criteria

- CJI does not fund direct assistance programs. However, CJI may fund organizations that, as part of a larger organizing strategy and or leadership development plan, help provide basic necessities to communities in desperate need; i.e. diapers to single parents in or near poverty; shelter to trans community members who suffer double digit housing insecurity, food to communities living in poverty.
- Organizations that have received **5 or more successive CJI grants** are now **REQUIRED** to complete a short **Long-term Grantee Evaluation Form**. This must accompany the organization's application and proposal. (Can we provide a link to the form? The form can also be a part of our data collection re: measures of success)
- **Organizations MUST meet the application deadline with all their required attachments.** To accommodate an increased number of proposals due to an open application process, CJI will hold applicants strictly to the application deadline.
- CJI has an **online application process** through **Submittable**, which is found on our website, www.cjifund.org.

Process and Timeline

The **deadline** for this application is **TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2019**. Grant decisions will be made by the CJI Circle, which convenes in late **September** of **2019**. Grant decisions will be made by the end of that month, with grants awards soon thereafter.

Applicants must first fill out an **ELIGIBILITY QUIZ**. Eligible applicants will then be sent a link to the full application. The Eligibility Quiz can be found [here](#).

An organization wishing to apply to CJI should **complete the online pre-screen questions, Cover Sheet, and the application with Submittable**, which has a link on CJI's website, www.cjifund.org. If there are technical questions about the application process, a Submittable staff person is there to help you.

If you have questions about your organization's eligibility, or the meaning of a question on the application, you are encouraged to reach out to Aleah Bacquie Vaughn at aleahb@cjifund.org **BEFORE** the deadline.

All applications are read and reviewed by a Pre-screen Team, comprised of one staff person, one donor and one activist. Those that fit the criteria are then passed on to the members of the Circle to read.

Applications must attach the required documents such as budgets, tax-exempt letter, organization demographics chart, etc. to be considered. Download budget template [here](#).