

CIRCLE FOR JUSTICE INNOVATIONS

Request for Proposals and 2020 Grant Application Information

CJI is requesting proposals from grassroots organizations working to transform the current U.S. criminal legal system. The present moment in history places our movement at a critical juncture. CJI believes that formerly incarcerated and directly impacted movement leaders and their organizations, working at the grassroots and drawing from experience, must be at the forefront of determining the direction and policies that will move us forward. Our activism and energy should promote restorative justice, alternatives to incarceration, de-carceration, and an end to criminalization and state violence. Please accept our appreciation for the time spent preparing the information that you provided to us. There is much more good work going on than we are ever able to fund. We thank you in advance for your efforts to bring about the end of state violence and communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

CJI's 2020 FUNDING PRIORITIES

This year CJI's funding fund organizations that are engaged in strengthening movement structures addressing strategic responses to state-sponsored violence both covert and insidious, criminalization of protests, and community healing. We will support the crucial work of building infrastructure that will replace the current system which is rooted in racism and inequity.

CJI defines **movement building** as:

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

CJI 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, most of whom have experienced incarceration. We share authority and a passion for supporting a 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**.

ELIGIBILITY 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 \$750,000 or less. If you are under the umbrella of a larger organization, please define your relationship with that organization.
- CJI will **ONLY** consider previous grantees that have provided a CJI Progress Report with information about their most-recent CJI-funded work.
- CJI does not fund direct service programs unless they are connected to a larger organizing strategy and/or leadership development plan, or help provide basic necessities to communities in desperate need.
- **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 FUNDING PREFERENCES

- Organizations operating in difficult political environments, e.g. in the presence of state violence and communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19;
- Organizations that develop new leaders especially from people who are marginalized within their own community.
- Leadership development may also include culturally appropriate healing or personal transformation work, especially within communities currently enduring state violence.
- Organizations that address discrimination or abuse against people who have been incarcerated or detained, ;
- Organizations working in the South, Indian country, and/or other rural areas.
- Organizations with a membership base, and an identifiable decision-making process for constituents/members/or communities.
- Organizations that engage in **innovative** collaborations, building alliances among organizations with diverse backgrounds and common interests.

PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The **deadline** for this application is **FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2020**. Grant decisions will be made by the CJI Circle, which convenes in late **September** of **2020**. Grant decisions will be made by the end of that month, with grants awards soon thereafter.

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

1. Applicants must first fill out an **ELIGIBILITY QUIZ**. The Eligibility Quiz can be found [here](#).
2. Eligible organizations will then be sent a link to **the full application on Submittable**. If there are technical questions about the application process, please contact support@submittable.com.
3. 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 Tina Reynolds at tinar@cjifund.org or Steven Pacheco at stevenp@cjifund.org **A WEEK BEFORE** the deadline.
4. If you are a previous grantee and received a grant in 2019, the Progress Report can be found [here](#). **Your progress report must be submitted to be considered for funding this year.**

Applications must attach the required documents such as budgets, tax-exempt letter, organization demographics chart, etc. to be considered.

We will host a webinar to answer your questions about the application process on June 24th, at 2 pm EST. Registration is required and you may register [here](#).