

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 participatory engagement of donors, donor-activists, and community organizers, most 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, mass incarceration and state violence in the United States.

Each year, we raise the grant-making funds, convene the Circle for political education, and determine our grant-making focus. This year we raised over \$500,000 and funded 39 organizations. 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 continues to 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 these 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, de-carceration and an end to mass criminalization and state violence.

CJI believes that the leadership of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people counters the injustice of perpetual punishment and allows for deeper analysis of the problems and solutions that will best serve impacted communities, and all communities. We are excited to support the vision of these powerful organizations as they drive our movement toward honest narratives and electoral, legislative, and policy change grounded in the wisdom of lived experiences.

Circle for Justice Innovations 2019 Grants List

All of Us or None Texas

San Antonio, Texas

Awarded 15,000

All of Us or None (AOUON) is a grassroots civil and human rights organization fighting for the rights of formerly and currently incarcerated people and their families, fighting against the discrimination that people face every day because of an arrest or conviction history. The goal of AOUON strengthens the voices of people most affected by mass incarceration and the growth of the prison industrial complex. AOUON will convene a larger network of Latinx and black advocates struggling within San Antonio communities to learn about, discuss and improve race relations and find common ground within the movement to restore human rights and dignity of people directly impacted by the barriers within criminal legal and law enforcement systems locally and throughout Texas. Through grassroots organizing, AOUON Texas is building a powerful political movement to win full restoration of the human rights of people with a conviction history. CJI funds will be used to strengthen political participation of marginalized communities, publishing opinion pieces written by AOUON members and collaborating with other community organizations.

Amistad Law Project

Philadelphia, PA

Awarded 15,000

Founded in October 2014, Amistad Law Project (ALP) advocates for the recognition of human rights for all people and believes in the intersection of movements against systemic oppression. Their name was suggested by Robert "Saleem" Holbrook, a writer and human rights advocate from Philadelphia who was sentenced as a teenager to life without the possibility of parole, and was released in February 2018 after serving 27 years. Amistad Law Project is a West Philadelphia-based public interest law center. Their mission is to fight for the human rights of people in their community by providing free and low-cost legal services to Philadelphians and those incarcerated in Pennsylvania's prisons. Additionally, they advocate for laws and policies that reflect their vision for a new justice paradigm and organize events and activities to educate the public on their rights and the law. During this grant cycle Amistad Law Project will continue to use novel legal strategies to address the criminal legal system especially Life Without Parole, by organizing directly impacted people and people of faith across Pennsylvania.

Black and Pink

Omaha, NB

Awarded 15,000

The Black & Pink story begins in 2005 when their founder Jason Lydon decided to institute an organization that was rooted in abolishing the prison industrial complex. The organization is a leader in organizing queer communities against any type of state violence, including prisons. CJI support will assist with the newly launched REAP program where Black and Pink will provide resources and support to members re-entering communities and to develop leaders through the creation and implementation of a unique curriculum made by and for formerly incarcerated people, focused on policy/advocacy 101. As they continue to grow as an organization, as a family, and as a community of accomplices - they will always hold true to their foundational and radical beliefs in the capacity for good, in the abilities of all people to be the best versions of themselves, and to dismantle the systems that plague their communities. They will always be accomplices to those impacted by the prison industrial complex, the atrocities it enacts, and their intention is to push on until it is completely dismantled.

California Coalition for Women Prisoners

Oakland, CA

Awarded 10,000



California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP) is a grassroots social justice organization with members inside and outside prison that challenges the institutional violence imposed on women, transgender people, and communities of color by the prison industrial complex (PIC). CCWP sees the dismantling of the PIC as an essential part of the struggle for racial and gender justice

and they prioritize the leadership of the people, families, and communities most impacted in building this movement. With a long history of achieving substantive changes such as ending: forced and coerced sterilization of women in prison, shackling of pregnant women, denial of adequate medical care and a reduction in prison-related suicides, CCWP brings years of experience to their newest campaign to Drop LWOP! Nationally, there are an estimated 246,600 adults ages 55 or older incarcerated in American prisons constituting approximately 16% of the total prison population in the United States. The medical costs of caring for a burgeoning elderly population behind bars alone will add to the strains of resource-strapped corrections systems. It costs twice as much to incarcerate someone over 50; in some cases, it may cost up to five

times more when medical costs are added. Moreover, some prisons are setting up makeshift hospice wings and opening nursing wards for people with serious cognitive degeneration. For this grant period, CCWP's continued work will be to prioritize their Drop Life WithOut Parole (LWOP) program, which proposes challenging inhumane life without parole sentences to free elders who have languished in prison for decades. In addition, to building strategic alliances with other groups that share the goal of ending mass imprisonment and fundamentally changing the criminal legal system.

Campaign Against Toxic Prisons

Gainesville, FL

Awarded 15,000

During this grant period, Campaign Against Toxic Prison (CATP) will focus on (1) building national cross-movement solidarity and coordinated action between environmental justice reform, prison reform, and abolitionist movements to drastically reduce prison populations and (2) advocate the concepts of environmental justice and just transitions in the conversation of addressing the needs of rural people in prison towns and prisoners themselves as this shift occurs. CJI funding will support the continuation of their work to have mandatory evacuation protocols for correctional facilities in hurricane zones, the implementation of air conditioning units in all Texas prisons, the launch of a campaign to highlight the exposure of currently incarcerated people to deadly toxins such as H-pylori in Texas, the end of torture and unwarranted solitary confinement in Alabama prisons and launch a campaign against new private prison construction in Alabama. CATP, conducts grassroots organizing/advocacy and direct action at the intersection of incarceration and the environment. They recognize the prison industrial-complex puts prisoners at exceptional risk of dangerous environmental conditions, as well as impacts surrounding communities and ecosystems by prison construction and operation.

Chicago Community Bail Fund

Chicago, IL

Awarded 10,000

Cook County Jail is the largest single unit jail in the United States and 90% of the people held there have not been convicted but were too poor to pay their bail. Chicago Community Bond Fund (CCBF) operates a revolving community bail fund to immediately free people from pretrial detention and supports them as their cases proceed. CCBF, which has released 271 people so far, also works to abolish the use of money bail and pretrial incarceration in Illinois through public education, support for litigation, legislation, and other policy advocacy. CCBF will work to stop wealth-based incarceration in Illinois using educational outreach, relationship building workshops, media work, public rallies, and developing community leaders. Between now and December 2019, CCBF will primarily focus on influencing the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Pretrial Practices so that in their final report, they recommend a statewide court rule eliminating pretrial jailing due to the inability to pay a money bond. The Commission's final report with recommendations is due in December 2019, and CCBF believes that this is the avenue most likely to result in a lasting end to wealth-based pretrial incarceration for Illinois.

Chispa Education Fund

Santa Anna, CA

Awarded 10,000

The purpose of this grant is to support young Latinxs in Orange County, California to engage with systems change campaigns in digital and live spaces surrounding criminal justice reform in order to disrupt police culture and shift the paradigm on policing. Chispa Education Fund (CEF) promotes and fosters transformative, intersectional organizing among young Latinxs in Orange County, California in order to uproot systems of oppression and cultivate systems grounded in community accountability, solidarity, and self-determination for all Latinxs to thrive. Since the Release of Records Act (SB1421) went into effect in 2019, allowing the public to review police misconduct records pertaining to officer involved shootings and sexual misconduct, among others. Local advocates and news organizations across the state, continue to be left in the dark as police departments drag their feet to release these records. SB1421 created a wave of backlash from police departments across the state, as police and sheriff unions challenged the new law in court to argue that the law should only apply to misconduct cases that took place after the law was passed, not before. In the end, the courts ruled SB1421 to apply retroactively, forcing police departments to comply with the public's request to obtain past records.

Community Success Initiative

Raleigh, NC

Awarded 10,000



The mission of Community Success Initiative is to facilitate programming that helps state wide alliances support people with criminal records and the barriers created to make a successful reentry. Those directly impacted by the criminal injustice system often need a second chance. The core of their work is to assist with the liberation of people from prison and jails, assist with removing the barriers that prevent them from thriving and build leadership to create a groundswell of social justice advocates , whose lived experience center the conversation about a more just North Carolina. The purpose of this grant is to help develop strategies and programming

and support services for The NC Second Chance Alliance. Their approach builds a framework for a statewide alliance of people with criminal records, their family members, service providers, congregations, community leaders and concerned citizens. These community stakeholders have come together to address the causes of criminal records and the barriers they create to successful reentry.

Equity and Transformation

Chicago, IL

Awarded 15,000

The mission of Equity and Transformation (EAT) is to build social and economic equity for Black Chicagoans engaged in the informal economy. Equity and Transformation (EAT) recently won

their first victory, May 31st, 2019, where Illinois became the 11th State to legalize cannabis. Governor J.B. Pritzker acknowledged their campaign as the “most equity-centric law in the nation.” Through their initiative 800,000 cannabis convictions will be expunged, 25% of the cannabis sales revenue will go into black communities, 20% of the revenue will go toward supporting services, and a \$20 million low-interest loan program for minority-owned businesses. Equity and Transformation is receiving this grant to ensure Senate Bill 7 makes it through rules and regulations so that their people impacted by marijuana arrests, get their records expunged and come home.

Fair Chance Project

Las Angeles, CA

Awarded 15,000

The Fair Chance Project represents a movement led by liberated lifers (formerly incarcerated men and women), prisoners and loved ones of term to life prisoners. Their work is organized around the demands for just sentencing laws and fair parole practices. Additionally, the group helps to integrate formerly incarcerated men and women back into society enabling them to “give back and to help build strong, self-sustaining communities”. CJI funding will help enable the Fair Chance Project to hire staff so they can grow their projects, better coordinate their work and build on each other. For example, their Walking the Yard mentorship program who come to the Fair Chance Project when they are released on parole can be immediately engaged in programs/projects; Re-entry, Life Changers & Brush of Kindness. The Fair Chance Project is also engaged in movement building work through their FUEL (Families United to End LWOP) program, with 32 Inside FUEL organizers in 18 prisons and over 180 members statewide.

Families for Justice as Healing

Roxbury, MA

Awarded 10,000

Families for Justice as Healing (FJAH) is a founding member of the National Council of Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls. FJAH's mission is to end the incarceration of women and girls. The purpose of this grant is to build power among people, fighting to reduce pre-trial detention and prosecutions, conducting our listening tour of formerly incarcerated women from the most incarcerated neighborhoods in Massachusetts, and addressing the dire conditions of confinement for women in Massachusetts state prisons and jails. FJAH is unabashedly abolitionist and unapologetically focused on Women and girls voices, which have been excluded from local and national conversations about "criminal justice reform," where even the larger movement for transformation and abolition often focuses on men. They strengthen the movement by bringing the experience and expertise of incarcerated



and formerly incarcerated women and girls who support and advocate for incarcerated loved ones.

FIERCE
NY

Bronx,
Awarded 10,000

By developing a politically conscious LGBTQ youth leadership collective to end homelessness, FIERCE addresses systemic racism and oppression through their drop-in

center and brave space, education, community organizing, advocacy, healing and other social justice work. They remain one of the few organizations nationally whose mission is to organize and build the personal and collective power of LGBTQ youth of color to actively direct their own social change agendas. This grant period, FIERCE is expanding its infrastructure and capacity through opening new drop-in centers in Manhattan and Brooklyn as they continue to recruit, organize and develop the leadership of over 1000 new members in the next 5 years through a participatory citywide network of public school students, LGBTQ youth of color who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Indigenous American Institute of Legacy
20,000

Rapid City, SD

Awarded

The importance of building community through cultural healing, and justice reform is paramount. Native Americans are only 10% of the population in South Dakota, but make up 80% of those currently incarcerated. During this grant period, Indigenous American Institute of Legacy will host 8 large scale community engagement events, as well as host up to three paid youth interns, while working with teams locally and on the reservation to collect information, advise, and advocate for community developed solutions on justice reform. Through dedication for cultivating change makers for the next seven generations, Indigenous American Institute of Legacy, recognizes they are at the beginning of that change by working along with systems and the negative impacts experienced in their communities.

Indians People Action

Butte, MO

Awarded 20,000



Indian People's Action is a Montana-based organization working on multiple fronts: native rights, anti-discrimination, the injustice in the justice system. Unfortunately, most Native people make up a little over 6 percent of the population of the state of Montana, but over 30 percent of the incarcerated population. The mission of Indian People's Action is to work in Montana's border towns and reservations to empower Montana's American Indian families and individuals to address the economic, racial and environmental inequities that shape their lives. After meeting with other grassroots groups working on criminal justice reform they have adopted a strategy based on attacking the problem from multiple angles and taking small bites. CJI funding will support additional community involvement in reaching out to local government, unions and other groups while still being involved in extreme cases of criminalization and incarceration.

Justice for Families, LTD

Sulfur, LO

Awarded 10,000

J4F is a national network of family leaders, impacted by the justice system, working to end mass criminalization and incarceration, particularly of youth and in communities of color. Various efforts produced the National information & connection hub established for 3,500 families from 49 states and the District of Columbia, the Family Leadership Institute which graduated 250 in addition to the, Federal performance measures on family engagement established through the Family Bill of Rights Campaign. They are working to advance systemic policy and practice change while also building a base of those directly impacted, to help other families, and

collectively achieve and sustain reforms. With support from CJI during this grant period, Justice 4 Families will host the Family Leadership Institute to provide technical assistance to Unheard Voices of the Concrete Jungle (UVOTCJ). Their goals will be 1:to provide people impacted by the system a free opportunity to gather with others like themselves for a learning and healing experience that highlights their power to change the systems that negatively impact their lives. I 2:to provide time, technical assistance, experience, connections, resources and tools to UVOTCJ to increase the speed and impact of their work.

The Justice Committee (JC)

Jackson Heights,NY

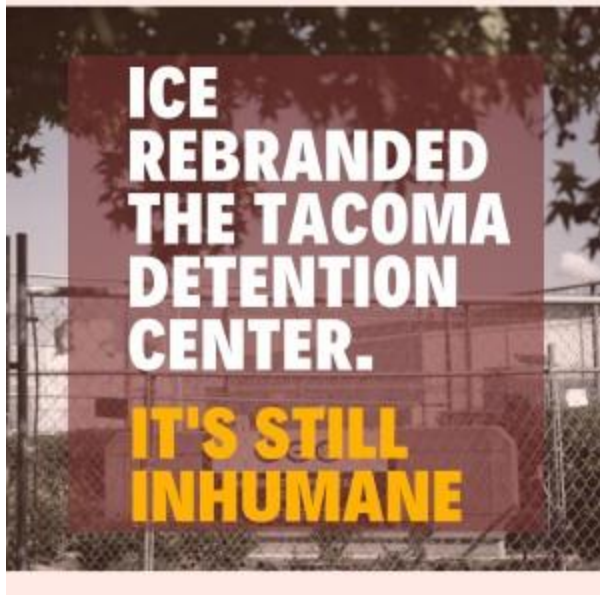
Awarded 10,000

The Justice Committee is a grassroots organization dedicated to building a movement against police violence and systemic racism in New York City while empowering low-income Latinx communities and other communities of color to address these issues. Recognizing that true power can only be exercised by unified communities they prioritize developing the leadership of both youth and elders and strive to make their organizing a multi-generational effort. By building solidarity with other anti-racist, immigrant and people of color-led organizations, they seek to contribute to a broad-based movement for social justice. During this grant period will support The Justice Committee's continued focus on three goals, 1. organize, support, and develop the leadership of families who've lost loved ones to the police. 2. Engage impacted New Yorkers in addressing abusive policing and strengthening community safety in ways that decrease reliance on law enforcement and the broader criminal legal system. 3. Organize for policy change to increase police accountability and transparency.

La Resistencia

Seattle, WA

Awarded 15,000



La Resistencia (formerly NWDC Resistance) is a grassroots undocumented- and detainee-led movement that works to end the detention of immigrants and stop all deportations. La Resistencia supports and follows the leadership of those detained at the Northwest Detention Center (NWDC) in Tacoma, Washington demanding better treatment and conditions and the stop to all deportations. As a movement they reject the paradigm that classifies immigrants as either “hardworking” or “criminal”, “worthy” or “unworthy.” They organize to dismantle an immigration system that profits off of the separation of families and the exploitation of undocumented communities. CJI general support will bolster their ongoing organizing and connection between

activists/organizers inside and outside the Northwest Detention Center, and their efforts to connect the struggles and demands of detained people with a broader movement to end detention, deportation, and the criminalization of immigrants in the US.

Migrant Justice

Burlington, VT

Awarded 12,500

Migrant Justice builds the voice, power, and capacity of the immigrant farmworker community to organize for economic justice and human rights. Migrant Justice members gather to discuss and analyze shared problems, and to envision collective solutions rooted in long-term systemic change. From this basis, members have developed a human rights platform prioritizing rights to dignified work, quality housing, freedom of movement, and freedom from discrimination. With support from CJI, Migrant Justice seeks to advance and expand their successful organizing against immigration detention and deportation. Direct focus on the No Polimigra campaigns to strengthen policies preventing collaboration between local cops and deportation agents; base-building and popular education work to reduce risks of detention; public campaigns and casework support to free community members in immigration detention; and organizing strategies around their landmark First Amendment lawsuit against ICE and the Vermont DMV to stop the targeted arrests of community leaders.

Nation Outside: The Voice of Formerly Incarcerated People Ann Arbor, MI Awarded 10,000

Nation Outside's mission is to organize, mobilize, and support Formerly Incarcerated People and their families to advocate for political and social changes that will reduce incarceration, as well as to educate the community about the successes and contributions of the formerly incarcerated in order to enhance their capacity to thrive. Nation Outside also actively involved in collaborative campaigns for Michigan bail reform and Clean Slate expungement legislation where the "clean slate" **bill** proposes that certain criminal offenses be automatically **expunged**. ... CJI support will enhance Nation Outside's focus on: 1) supporting FIP's in voter education and exercising their right to vote in Michigan; 2) maintaining a seat at the policy table to represent the interests of FIP's; 3) educating FIP's to avail themselves of the existing opportunities for reducing barriers to housing and employment, while 4) advocating to eliminate more intractable barriers to housing and employment.

New Hour for Women and Children

Brentwood, NY

Awarded 10,000



This past year New Hour for Women and Children mobilized over 45 members, including the majority of their EMERGE graduates, to the state capital to address legislators about the impact of elders languishing in prison the Release Aging People in Prison legislation. Sharing her story after serving a 17 year sentence, Anitria, an EMERGE graduate spoke movingly about her lived experience during a press conference attended by 400 people. New Hour's mission

is to provide pre- and post-release services to promote successful community reentry and family reunification for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women and their children on Long Island. CJI funding will be used to expand their EMERGE Training Program which is a 12-week training provided to increase opportunities for EMERGE members to push for targeted statewide reforms, including domestic violence rights for survivor defendants, reproductive justice for incarcerated women, parole reform for elders and ending the overuse of solitary confinement. New Hour seeks to elevate the experiences of formerly incarcerated women and their children, and to create spaces for their stories to be heard and their voices to impact their current criminal legal system.

Orleans Parish Prison Reform Coalition

Louisiana, NO

Awarded 15,000

Through actions of the Orleans Parish Prison Reform Coalition (OPPRC), they have lowered the incarceration rate that was almost five times higher than the national average. They have also worked with different system actors to improve conditions of confinement with a consent decree. After having much success with bringing the jail from ~7000 operable beds to 1,438, their Sheriff continues to attempt to expand the facility with an additional 240 beds this year by continuing to use a Temporary Detention Center (TDC) and adding an additional Phase 3 jail building. CJI funding will support their successful reform efforts, lowering the jail population to 1,150, while working to mobilize the community to oppose jail expansion. OPPRC are also working on methods to reduce the rate at which people are incarcerated (primarily through ending money bail and advocating for release mechanisms when the jail reaches capacity).

Ostara Initiative

Minneapolis,MN

Awarded 10,000

Today, Ostara supports pregnant and parenting justice-involved people in nine correctional facilities throughout Minnesota and Alabama. Of the 24,000 women who will come under correctional control in Minnesota this year, 4-6% will be pregnant. Ostara exists to collectively transform systems by reimagining justice, advancing health, and reclaiming dignity in their policies and practices for all pregnant and parenting people. With CJI support Ostara's efforts to reimagine the criminal justice experience for pregnant and postpartum people, using existing work in Minnesota, Alabama, and Indiana to incubate and refine new policies, programming, and legislative reforms will be strengthened. This initiative will be led by formerly incarcerated women who have experienced pregnancy in the context of the justice system, and will focus on improving conditions of confinement and collectively creating community-based alternatives to incarceration that emphasize healing over punishment, and end parent-infant separation.

Parole Illinois

Chicago, IL

Awarded 15,000

Parole Illinois aims to bring together incarcerated activists, their family members, and activists in the free world to end death-by-incarceration in our state and mobilize for a fair and inclusive parole system that gives every incarcerated Illinoisan a fair chance to return home. More broadly, we aim to shift the focus of the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) from punishing people to returning people to productive citizenship. Fundamental to these goals is our commitment to work collaboratively across prison walls and bring the voices of incarcerated activists into prison-policy discussions. CJI grant will support Parole Illinois regional chapters to produce and distribute educational materials that will help bring their message to churches, community groups, and representatives in southern Illinois.

People's Justice Project

Columbus,OH

Awarded 15,000



People's Justice Project (PJP) is a non-profit grassroots organization of working people and communities of color united across Columbus, Ohio. PJP is working to confront police violence, end mass incarceration, and promote safety and health in their communities. CJI will support PJP's strategy to build civic power through the mobilization of directly impacted people moving them into direct action. Through canvassing and community conversations PJP leaders continuously push for police

accountability, door knock/host community conversations to earn commitments to vote, and educate voters at community meetings about issues that are important to them.

Philadelphia Community Bail Fund

Philadelphia, PA

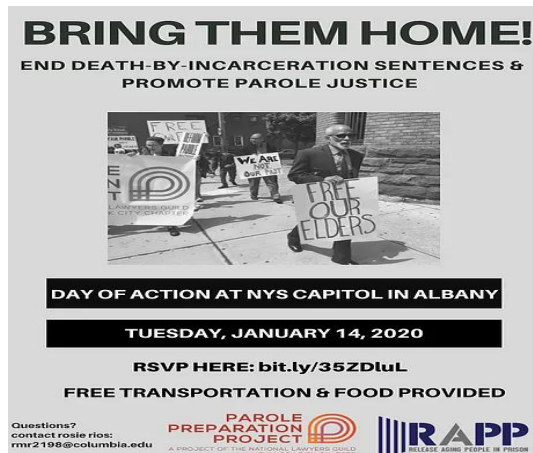
Awarded 10,000

The mission of the Philadelphia Community Bail Fund is to end cash bail in Philadelphia, but until that day they will post bail for residents who cannot afford to pay. The **Philadelphia Bail Fund** found 90% of folks they helped still showed up aided by free transportation and text message reminders, more than 9 out of 10 of the people helped by the fund did show up for court. CJI support will assist building out the bail funds community organizing work to end pretrial detention in Philadelphia. The vast majority of their budget is from individual donors and goes directly towards posting bail and providing supportive services to people they have bailed out. We hope to use this grant to host base-building events; pay for transportation for our members to conduct jail visits; attend speaking events and leadership development conferences; pay for materials; and pay organizer stipends to people who have been directly affected by incarceration.

Release Aging People in Prison

New York, NY

Awarded 20,000



The number of older adults in prison and jail was projected to grow by a “staggering 4,400 percent” within the 50-year period between 1980 and 2030—to an estimated 400,000 people. Release Aging People in Prison/RAPP Campaign is a grassroots organizing and advocacy project founded and led by formerly incarcerated people. They mobilize community power to end mass incarceration and promote racial justice through the release of older and aging people in prison. With rising numbers of elders behind bars, RAPP was the first group to pose release (as opposed to retrofitting prisons for geriatric care) as the solution. RAPP strikes at a

basic element of incarceration: the racist paradigm of permanent punishment. They refuse to exclude any group or category based on crime, especially violence and violence against police. Significant advances in parole release rates and support for transformative policies has elicited virulent pushback from police organizations and conservative policy makers. CJI funding will support RAPP to continue to change the narrative that has fueled life imprisonment and the use of policing and prisons to contain social justice struggles and community resistance.

RestoreHer US. America

Fayetteville, GA

Awarded 10,000

RestoreHer is a policy advocacy organization focused on pre-arrest diversion and reentry, based in Georgia. RestoreHer addresses the social determinants of criminalization and social inequities through education, awareness, leadership, and policy advocacy to protect the dignity and restore the rights of all women directly impacted by incarceration, convictions, and trauma. RestoreHer’s mission is to enhance the lives of directly impacted women and work in partnership to end the vicious cycle that leads to the mass criminalization and incarceration of women of color and pregnant women in the south. CJI support will further women's leadership development and workshops for directly impacted women of color to improve and shift the dialogue around affordable housing needs, ending discrimination, improving health outcomes, employment opportunities and human and civil rights of women impacted by the criminal legal system.

Rockaway Youth Task Force

Far Rockaway, NY

Awarded 10,000

The Rockaway Youth Task Force (RYTF) is a grassroots member-led organization principally comprised of young women of color within the Rockaway Peninsula. RYTF builds power to secure social, economic and racial justice for residents of the Rockaway Peninsula and beyond.

RYTF develops politically conscious youth leaders who are invested in improving themselves and their communities through member-led campaigns, leadership development, movement building, and cultural expression. CJI grant will support the work to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline by removing all police from schools in Far Rockaway, ending arrests and summons of youth, reducing school suspensions, as well as increasing school quality and restorative justice measures to achieve safe and supportive schools.

Southsiders Organized for Unity & Liberation

Chicago, IL

Awarded 15,000



SOUL's mission is to assist low-income people of color in the Chicago Southland to build power, then subsequently leverage that power to fight for their own interest and liberation. In order to build sustainable movements, SOUL believes the objective is to understand the concept of "power" and what it takes to create sustainable communities rooted in their values. SOUL was able to move nearly half of City Council to commit to rejecting any police union contract that did not include their 14 reform recommendations. In October, they held a 5-hour sit-in at Cook County Criminal Court with calling for an end to money bond, which led to a meeting with a Chief Judge who committed to appoint someone of their selection to the Supreme Court Commission. CJI's support will assist SOUL with their continued work to build relationships which is at the core of their organizing and is recognized as happening in many different ways at different times.

The National Re-entry Network for Returning Citizens

Washington, DC

Awarded \$15,000

The National Re-entry Network for Returning Citizens' mission is to build a strong, national network comprised of individuals returning from incarceration who support each other's successful reintegration and to connect folks to jobs, housing, training, mental health resources, substance abuse treatment, and recovery programs upon their return to the community. They use a client-centered approach to identify basic needs and to create a continuum of care that can address barriers to reentry, promote restorative practices, and reduce recidivism. During this grant period National Re-entry Network for Returning Citizens will continue with their mobilization efforts for the Matthew Charles and William Underwood Second Look Act, which passed last year and would allow federal judges to modify sentences that are longer than 10 years if the court finds that the defendant 1) is not a threat to public safety; 2) presents no credible risk of criminal conduct; and 3) is ready for reentry; and the interest of justice warrant a sentence modification.

The Ordinary People's Society

Dothan, AL

Awarded 20,000



The Ordinary People's Society (T.O.P.S) is an innovative, faith-based community program founded in 1999. T.O.P.S offers hope and creates an environment that provides a continuum of unconditional acceptance and care to individuals and their families who suffer the effects of drug addiction, mass-incarceration, homelessness, poverty, unemployment, hunger and illness-without regard to race, sex, creed, color, religion or social status. Beginning with their pre release program which supports folks during incarceration and after, to mobilizing communities to give voice to the issues and challenges which negatively impact a person's human and civil rights during and after jail and prison. CJI support will assist their continued vision to empower their own people to not only be a political power, but also self sufficient.

Trans United

Washington, DC

Awarded 10,000

Trans United is a trans-led (majority trans women of color) national organization that partners with visionary transgender leaders and organizations to build the collective capacity of the trans community and to improve the lives of transgender people, their families, and their allies. Trans United seeks to build a world in which all of our communities, especially those most marginalized, can thrive, be healthy, and live free of violence, poverty, homelessness, and discrimination. With CJI support, Trans United will expand the overall staff capacity and infrastructure of the organization. Their mission is to build leadership and capacity in the movement for trans equality.

TRANScending Barriers

Their mission is to empower the transgender and gender non-conforming community in Georgia through community organizing with leadership building, advocacy, and direct services so that lives can be changed and a community uplifted. Their mission is to dismantle and abolish the systems that maintain oppression and inequity through punishment, violence and control. During this grant period, funds will be allocated to accomplish specific tasks for their Prison Industrial Complex abolition projects through demanding self-determination and the reorganization of power in Georgia. Their abolition work collaborates with their currently incarcerated members across Georgia's prisons and jails in order to build stronger inside/outside organizing, uplift analysis, strategy, and advocacy for their family on the inside, and bolster their current & formerly incarcerated family perspectives.

Unheard Voices Outreach

Nashville, TN

Awarded 10,000



They work with formerly incarcerated citizens to develop customized "Life Plans" to assist with reentry. Through the facilitation of leadership development, people skills, technological proficiency, which is offered to strengthen participation in a supportive community. Unheard Voices engage in community activism to abolish felonism, (A systemic, institutionalized prejudice against people suspected or convicted of a felony. This prejudice often extends to people who support individuals with a criminal

history) their work includes advocacy for release at parole hearings and increasing community awareness around the multi-faceted problems with mass incarceration--necessary policy reform, plugging the juvenile to prison pipeline, and exposing parole board abuses such as misuse of taxpayer money through unnecessary hearings and excessive parole denial. With CJI support this grant period, Unheard Voices will create a program and mobile application with user-friendly technology that will give citizens transitioning from prison in middle Tennessee instant access to resources that will aid their reentry.

University Beyond Bars

Seattle, WA

Awarded 10,000

University Beyond Bars (UBB) is a stakeholder-driven organization established by the currently incarcerated in 2003. Over the past 16 years, UBB has developed a unique position within the prison that includes paid staff, office space, laptop computers, etc. They understand that as an

organization they have a level of privilege which they leverage through UBB first and foremost as an empowerment organization. While education is their core function, their overarching vision is to disrupt mass incarceration and its systemic contributors and impacts. UBB's founding principles are to : Confront racism and classism, educate the public about prisons, the criminal justice system, and the effective alternatives, re-humanize currently incarcerated people in the evy of legislature, the media, and the public. With CJI support UBB will expand their Organizational and Development program, invite guest lecturers, facilitate a series of workshops, create and compile written curriculum and training materials and make them available to the social justice, cultural, and community organizations operating within the prison.

We Are Better Together

Boston, MA

Awarded 10,000

We Are Better Together - Warren Daniel Hairston Project's mission is to educate and support families on both sides of gun violence to break the cycle of trauma and to promote transformative healing and social change, within themselves and their communities. WABT was founded and is led by women who have lost loved ones to homicide and/or incarceration, many of whom are also previously incarcerated. They do this through building the leadership of families affected by homicide and/or incarceration, creating culturally-appropriate healing spaces, and building collaborative partnerships to challenge narratives that dehumanize, stigmatize and ultimately drive more harm. CJI funding will pilot a new element of their programming to strengthen the capacity of mothers affected by homicide and/or incarceration to more effectively navigate and advocate within the criminal legal system for themselves (as many being formerly incarcerated) and/or their loved ones facing incarceration/formerly incarcerated.

Youth Art and Self Empowerment

Philadelphia, PA

Awarded 15,000

The Youth Art & Self-empowerment Project (YASP) empowers young people who are or have been incarcerated in adult jails and prisons through a combination of artistic expression, political education, and community organizing. YASP carries out this mission by providing space for incarcerated young people to express themselves creatively, building platforms to share their voices, and helping young people develop as leaders and organizers both within and beyond the prison walls. YASP is building youth leadership in the movement to break the school-to-prison pipeline and end mass incarceration in Pennsylvania. With CJI support in the coming year, YASP will continue to build the power of young people, families, and communities in Philadelphia to push back against the devastating impacts of mass incarceration. Through offering training to new youth movement leaders, lift up the stories of young people impacted by pretrial detention in adult jails, and advocate for local and state policy change to end the detention of youth as adults, abolishing cash bail and other forms of pretrial punishment, and advance models of restorative and transformative justice that create real community healing and safety.

Youth Rise Texas

Austin, TX

Awarded 15,000



Youth Rise Texas envisions a world in which youth lead the charge to ensure that all people have access to safety, happiness and freedom. Their work centers restorative practices, consciousness raising education, and strategic actions to transform individuals who are prepared and poised to change the world around them. Youth Rise Texas uplifts teens whose lives have been impacted by individual, family, and collective criminalization so that they may heal, take action, and cultivate compassionate communities. Youth Rise

Texas delivers a healing-centered, consciousness-raising organizing curriculum to directly impacted teens in Austin, facilitated by trained Youth Organizers, while spearheading a youth-led Participatory Action Research initiative. This vision offers their members and their communities education on parental removal and criminalization impacts while informing their policy platform. CJI support will assist to ensure the continuation and expansion of these critical programs, offer living wage salaries for their Youth Organizers, and training that will serve them as they transition to the adult world.