

Circle for Justice Innovations
CJI STARVING THE BEAST Circle Fund
Grantee Profiles ✦ 2020



Starving the Beast is a participatory grantmaking circle established by the Circle for Justice Innovations and the Open Society Foundations in 2017.

Released on February 22, 2021. Revised on March 16, 2021.

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Starving the Beast Circle Grants 2020

The Circle for Justice Innovations (CJI) funds and supports grassroots nonprofit organizations working to uproot systems that perpetuate harm and injustice, and replace them with structures that cultivate justice, healing, kinship, creativity, and love. CJI believes this movement must be led by those most impacted by the injustices of the current system, working in alliances across race, class, faith, gender, gender identity, sexuality, immigration status, physical and mental ability, and age.

CJI's **Starving the Beast Circle Fund (STB)** is an innovative grantmaking panel comprised of donors, donor-activists, and community organizers, most of whom have experienced incarceration themselves. They share authority through a common passion for supporting a meaningful, transformative, and systemic change of the criminal legal system.

Through Starving the Beast, CJI and the Open Society Foundations finance community-based options to reduce incarceration as a response to criminalized consenting adult behaviors including drug use, sex work, and other survival behaviors. STB is intended to improve the capacity of community nonprofits to deliver resources, provide harm-reduction services, and advocate policy changes limiting police interactions around mental health crises, homelessness, and consenting adult behavior.

Starving the Beast supports harm-reduction practices that are non-coercive and entirely outside the criminal legal system, as opposed to those resulting from an arrest or other system contact. CJI's overall goal is to broaden community education and encourage activism challenging the still-raging war on drugs. CJI grantees are in the best position to combat the hyper-criminalization and incarceration of communities of color and others living in poverty.

As with all CJI Circle Funds, STB engages as a truly diverse and innovative grantmaking model—panels comprised of people with a history of incarceration, drug policy experts and advocates, and individual donors, all of whom share a passion for meaningful, transformative, systemic change of the criminal legal system,

Nurturing a Movement: STB Awards 26 Grants Totaling \$400,000

In this 2020 grant cycle, CJI's Starving the Beast Circle proudly announces the award of 27 grants ranging in size from \$15,000 to \$20,000 to organizations working in 19 states. In total this year, \$415,000 in STB grants will support projects seeking to end state violence, respond to issues surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, facilitate harm reduction initiatives, and support healing justice in disproportionately impacted communities across the United States.

Contact CJI Program Director Tina Reynolds at tinar@cjifund.org with any inquiries about CJI Circle Grant Programs.

Starving the Beast (STB) Grantees 2020

| 2020 STB Grantee Organization | Headquarters | Grant Amount |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|

Healing Justice

| | | |
|--|-----------------|----------|
| Homies Unidos | Los Angeles, CA | \$15,000 |
| Women Against Mass Incarceration | Bridgeport, CT | \$15,000 |
| FirstFollowers | Champaign, IL | \$15,000 |
| Mano Amiga | San Marcos, TX | \$15,000 |
| The Ishtar Collective | Montpelier, VT | \$15,000 |
| The Seed House | Wichita, KS | \$15,000 |
| Free Hearts | Nashville, TN | \$15,000 |
| Barrios Unidos | Chimayo, NM | \$15,000 |
| Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos (SCBU) | Santa Cruz, CA | \$15,000 |

Ending State Violence

| | | |
|---|-----------------|----------|
| New Jersey Red Umbrella Alliance | Long Branch, NJ | \$15,000 |
| Southside Harm Reduction Services | Minneapolis, MN | \$15,000 |
| Racial Advocates for Cross-Cultural Education (RACCE) | Waterbury, CT | \$15,000 |
| Aileen's | Federal Way, WA | \$15,000 |
| Peoples Advocacy Institute (PAI) | Jackson, MI | \$20,000 |
| Critical Resistance Oakland | Oakland, CA | \$15,000 |
| Showing Up for Racial Justice Ohio (SURJ OH) | Cleveland, OH | \$15,000 |
| The Black Sex Worker Collective | New York, NY | \$15,000 |
| Material Aid and Advocacy Program | Cambridge, MA | \$15,000 |
| Anti-Police Terror Project | Oakland, CA | \$15,000 |
| Central Ohio Freedom Fund | Columbus, OH | \$15,000 |

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|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| Ubuntu Village NOLA | New Orleans, LA | \$15,000 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|

| 2020 STB Grantee Organization | Headquarters | Grant Amount |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|

COVID-19 Response

| | | |
|---|----------------|----------|
| New York Transgender Advocacy Group | New York, NY | \$15,000 |
| Baltimore Safe Haven | Baltimore, MD | \$15,000 |
| O.D. Aid | Fort Worth, TX | \$20,000 |
| Dreamcatcher Initiative, Inc. | Fitchburg, MA | \$15,000 |

Harm Reduction

| | | |
|---|--------------------|------------------|
| Challenges Inc. | Piedmont, SC | \$15,000 |
| Offender Alumni Association | Birmingham, AL | \$15,000 |
| | Grand Total | \$415,000 |

GRANTEE DIRECTORY

| | |
|---|----|
| Aileen's..... | 14 |
| Anti-Police Terror Project | 20 |
| Baltimore Safe Haven | 23 |
| Barrios Unidos..... | 11 |
| Central Ohio Freedom Fund | 20 |
| Challenges..... | 25 |
| Critical Resistance Oakland..... | 16 |
| Dreamcatcher Initiative | 24 |
| FirstFollowers..... | 7 |
| Free Hearts..... | 8 |
| Homies Unidos..... | 6 |
| Mano Amiga..... | 8 |
| Material Aid and Advocacy Program | 19 |
| New Jersey Red Umbrella Alliance | 12 |
| New York Transgender Advocacy Group | 22 |
| O.D. Aid | 24 |
| Offender Alumni Association | 26 |
| People's Advocacy Project | 15 |
| Racial Advocates for Cross-Cultural Education | 13 |
| Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos..... | 10 |
| Showing Up for Racial Justice Ohio..... | 17 |
| Southside Harm Reduction Services | 12 |
| The Black Sex Worker Collective..... | 18 |
| The Ishtar Collective | 9 |
| The Seed House | 10 |
| Ubuntu Village NOLA | 21 |
| Women Against Mass Incarceration..... | 7 |

Homies Unidos + Los Angeles, CA

War on Drugs Advocacy Project



Homies Unidos works to end violence and promote peace through the promotion of human rights in immigrant communities and the empowerment of young people and families in Los Angeles and beyond. Their mission is to defend the inherent right of youth, families, and their communities to pursue their dreams and reach their full potential in a just, safe, and healthy society. To achieve this, Homies Unidos fights against all forms of injustice threatening the health and safety of their community members. This includes the disastrous outcomes of the war on drugs and anti-gang rhetoric. By identifying and addressing the needs of at-risk,

gang-identified, formerly incarcerated, and system-impacted individuals, they uplift and empower those at the margins of society to become leaders in their communities and agents of social change.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will help Homies Unidos provide educational workshops, professional development opportunities, leadership development, and positive recreation to individuals who have been impacted by immigration enforcement and/or incarceration. They will also provide free and low-cost tattoo removal services, mentorship and re-entry support, and community engagement projects to break down the barriers holding back community members from speaking out against injustice.

Women Against Mass Incarceration + Bridgeport, CT

Harm Reduction and Empowerment in Criminalized Communities

Women Against Mass Incarceration (WAMI) is a grassroots organization of re-entry professionals, advocates, and activists working to re-imagine their communities and end the incarceration of women and girls through advocacy, outreach, and organizing. WAMI partners with grassroots organizations, policymakers, and other stakeholders who support their mission. Women Against Mass Incarceration is the only organization in Connecticut that frames women's rights as human rights for formerly incarcerated women and girls. Most WAMI allies focus on policy and litigation, whereas WAMI's focus is on women's empowerment, prison abolition, community and family engagement, and hyper-local work in the community to end the incarceration of women and girls that seeks to educate women and girls about the negative impact of the criminal legal system, especially as it impacts communities of color.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will be used to develop strategies for securing compassionate release and clemency orders for incarcerated women currently at risk.

FirstFollowers + Champaign, IL

Transformative Justice Hub



FirstFollowers began as a re-entry program but has since grown substantially in scope. With their initial efforts focused on running a drop-in center, they noticed many people coming home from prison who wanted to give back to the communities where they may have harmed people. This is what sparked the broader social justice component of their efforts, especially working with youth in their GoMAD workforce development program, which is now three years old. Their experience

running a drop-in center and operating GoMAD also reinforced the idea that they cannot advance their work without also advocating for changes to public perception, the government's attitude, and resource allocation decisions.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will be used to advance three skill sets among their participants by providing support for people coming home from prison, providing support and direction for those impacted by gun violence, and expanding their participant's capacity to advocate for themselves in public spaces.

Mano Amiga + San Marcos, TX

Decriminalizing the Leading Arrest Charge in Hays County, TX and Boosting Mental Health Access to Residents Affected by the Criminal Legal System



Mano Amiga has undertaken in 2020, as a part of their broader strategy, to create parallel institutions to the government and incarceration profiteers to highlight systemic injustice while prioritizing the safety, autonomy, and insights of those impacted by incarceration.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will focus on decriminalizing the top arrest charge in Hays County, TX and boosting mental health access for those impacted by

confinement, which is a two-pronged strategy consisting of ending the criminalization of marijuana in Hays County, where low-level possession has been the leading arrest charge since 2013 and responding to a continued need expressed by the majority of participants in their Community Bail Fund. This strategy enables qualified professional therapists via Seek Institute, guided by an analysis of structural racism, to assist individuals impacted by criminalization to work through their mental health challenges.

Free Hearts + Nashville, TN

Community Release, Not Cages

Free Hearts is an organization led by formerly incarcerated women that provides support, education, and advocacy in organizing families impacted by incarceration to keep families together and reunite those torn apart. Their focus on the experiences of justice-involved women and their families.

The development of their leadership has led them to focus their efforts for systemic change on the criminalization of poverty through bail practices, the privatization of probation, and the imposition of fines and fees; the criminalization of survivors of domestic and sexual violence through failure to protect, felony murder and self-defense prosecutions; community reinvestment through community-based alternatives to incarceration; and the expansion and restoration of voting rights, and fighting voter suppression.

Free Hearts has changed laws, won legal settlements, ended Nashville’s private prison contract, and provided support for thousands of women and girls, all in one of the most punitive and violent states in the nation and ground-zero of the private prison industry.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will be used to support the longstanding efforts to end pre-trial detention and the cash bail system by seeking community release for those living with substance abuse disorders by assisting them with wrap-around services and opportunities for housing.

The Ishtar Collective + Montpelier, VT

Good Samaritans



The Ishtar Collective is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the intersectional issues of sex work concerning LGBTQIA+, race, class, gender, and disability equity. They are run by and for current or former sex workers, sex industry allies, and survivors of human trafficking who live or work in Vermont. As an anti-trafficking and sex worker rights organization, the Ishtar Collective is dedicated to supporting their communities through policy advocacy, direct services, and community education. As experts on sex and the sex industry, their communities are uniquely positioned to educate the public on matters of sexuality and commercial sexual labor. They are also the first line of defense against trafficking within the sex industry by protecting their industry against exploitation and providing other organizations, individuals, and groups with expert testimony and evidence-based data on their lived experiences. They are trans and

cisgender women, cisgender men, non-binary, people of color, multi-racial, white, indigenous, people who live with disabilities, queer and straight, and represent all socio-economic classes. They live at varying intersections of these identities and degrees of privilege.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will provide educational resources and peer support to their members and communities for them to live healthier, safer, happier lives.

The Seed House + Wichita, KS

“Invest, Don’t Arrest” Progeny Partnership for Kansas

The Seed House has created a designated pool of funds to invest in alternatives and community-based programs, achieved through community mobilization efforts and the passage of legislation to shutter four youth prisons. Progeny is a partnership between young people and adults focused on reimagining the juvenile justice system and reinvesting in community-based alternatives.

Progeny is a program of The Seed House La Casa De Semilla, an organization with a mission to create an arena for established and emerging community leaders and organizations to grow and develop their capacity for bringing about sustainable justice and equality through dialogue, creative expression, and collective action.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will continue their *Youth Justice Reimagined: From the Heartland to the Coast* campaign, to reduce law enforcement contact with youth and engage and elevate young people at the local level to organize at the state level.

Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos + Santa Cruz, CA

Prison Project Formerly Incarcerated Restoring Rights Engagement



Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos’s (SCBU) Prison Project Formerly Incarcerated Restoring Rights Engagement (TPPFIRRE) program works to heal their communities through culturally driven and spiritually informed services to youth and adults within their community. Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos provides services to uplift the community and allow individuals to draw strength from their authentic selves. They provide political education, restorative justice, and community mobilization training. The overarching goal of their work is to end mass incarceration and provide

curative space in the face of oppression.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will be used to expand their current program. With these funds, they will deepen and strengthen their reach into the prison system and empower currently and formerly incarcerated people and their families. TPPFIRRE advocates for healing services and education access for those currently within the prison system who are being denied these programs. TPPFIRRE connects impacted families and creates a unified voice that refuses to accept conditions that further impede communities of color.

Barrios Unidos + Chimayo, NM

Building Systemic Empathy



Barrios Unidos supports those struggling with addiction, the families shattered by the opioid epidemic, and re-engaging community through the spirit of Querencia, The folk term for the love of place, land, culture, and people. “If we don't learn to love them, we will never defend them”. They reached out to their community and asked how support was needed and as a result has followed through. Our at-risk populations, those living

with substance use disorder, displaced children, grandparents, community members, local healers, judicial, and other local agencies have spoken, and they have listened.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will be used to develop training for the community tailored to Northern New Mexico participants and communities to address the many broken levels folks have experienced and bring awareness and healing to lived, experienced, and internalized trauma.

New Jersey Red Umbrella Alliance + Long Branch, NJ

Sex Worker-Led Diversion and Harm Mitigation of Policing in New Jersey



The goals of the project are to mobilize sex workers in New Jersey to end the criminalization of their lives that is the root cause of the injustice they experience. Their work to build the movement for the rights of sex workers includes mobilizing constituents and allies, investing in sex worker organizing through leadership development of stand-out activists of color among sex workers, and others most affected by human rights violations. They also document

and publicize their campaign that addresses the root causes of rights violations against sex workers.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will be used to document and review all steps in the proposed project to create materials, publications, and media messages to raise awareness of what works to protect the rights of sex workers and to build momentum nationwide for grassroots, constituent-led organizing.

Southside Harm Reduction Services + Minneapolis, MN

An Oral History Project on Criminalized Survival in South Minneapolis

Based in South Minneapolis, Southside Harm Reduction Services (SHRS) works within a harm reduction framework to promote human rights to health, safety, autonomy, and agency among people who use substances. SHRS serves its mission through the delivery of naloxone, clean syringes and works, street outreach, and *skillshares* to spread knowledge and resources throughout the community.

Through this project, SHRS will support community members to interview and record local views around conceptions of safety. The criminal legal system intentionally buries vulnerable

people in crisis mode making it near-impossible for them to ever make their voices heard. Many of these conversations are taking place in the context of the Minneapolis Sanctuary Movement, which is fighting for housing justice, abolition, and land reclamation by supporting the most impacted people to take the lead. Minneapolis parks, recently declared sanctuaries for unsheltered people and the sites of several encampments and new resource centers, are now often aggressively targeted by law enforcement.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will be used to develop this oral history project dedicated to facilitating the engagement of SHRS houseless participants in current conversations and activism around the intersecting issues impacting their safety, including housing justice, land reclamation, police brutality, and the war on drugs.

Racial Advocates for Cross-Cultural Education ✦ Waterbury, CT

Police Free Schools: Limiting Police Contact with Students in Waterbury



At Racial Advocates for Cross-Cultural Education (RACCE), their mission is to challenge systems of oppression by advocating for culturally competent educational practices. They, therefore, believe that the most effective way to triumph over systemic forms of oppression is to have an

educational system that serves the historically underrepresented and underserved. Their responsibility is then to be activists, advocates, and agitators for racial justice in their schools.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will be used to offer youth and community members political education, training, and increased access by Waterbury's communities of color to experts on alternatives to policing and exclusionary school discipline policies. RACCE will also work to connect their communities to information about inhumane and culturally anemic Eurocentric mental health care practices that pose essential gaps to the availability of appropriate interventions, helping folks to cross barriers and create their liberation.

Aileen's + Federal Way, WA

Peer Leadership Program at Aileen's



Aileen's is a peer-led organizing and hospitality space located in Federal Way for women working along the Pacific Highway in south King County, Washington, who are facing poverty, homelessness, criminalization, violence, unmet health needs, and other obstacles. Aileen's provides peer leadership development, intensive case management and advocacy, harm reduction outreach, and general aid to the community.

Aileen's Peer Leadership Program is unique in that it is pro-drug/drug user, pro-sex trade, anti-law enforcement, and pro-low barrier harm reduction. Peer Leadership provides more than just lip service to the idea of people doing it for themselves. Aileen's Peer Leadership Program provides opportunities for women to move into paid employment and housing and out of harmful state involvement without having to change or be "clean," and this is

unheard of among service providers in south King County.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will be used toward the continuation of their Peer Leadership Program, and other programs run by their peer leaders including giveaways, outreach, and needle exchanges.

People's Advocacy Institute + Jackson, MI

JXN: Saving Ourselves Initiative

The People's Advocacy Institute (PAI) is a resource and training incubator for transformative justice in the south. They harness the collective genius of frontline communities most impacted by oppression to develop new policies, institutions, and practices that engage communities in the creation and implementation of policies and practices that respect the dignity, morality, and humanity of communities hardest hit by systemic racism, state violence, economic violence, and mass incarceration and criminalization.

To date, PAI has championed several firsts in Mississippi, including the incubation of Mississippi's only bail fund: the Mississippi Bail Fund Collective, the state's only Participatory Defense provider, incubation of the state's Participatory Budgeting process, and the state's only violence interruption and credible messenger programs. They have also co-led with the Mississippi Poor People's Campaign the revitalization of the Mississippi Prison Reform Coalition to decarcerate and shutter Parchman Penitentiary.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will involve the use of Credible Messengers and Violence Interrupters—hiring and training community members from target neighborhoods to serve as outreach workers and violence interrupters. Credible Messengers and Violence Interrupters are tasked with mediating conflict before it reaches the point of violence, providing connections to community members in need of housing, jobs, and therapy, and working to change norms through community-based healing justice training and support.

Critical Resistance Oakland + Oakland, CA

Critical Resistance Oakland Chapter



Critical Resistance (CR) is a grassroots organization building a movement to end the reliance on the interlocking systems of imprisonment, surveillance, and policing—the so-called prison-industrial complex—as a response to political, social, and economic problems. Their approach combines organizing with advocacy to dismantle current structures of imprisonment and policing, changing how communities and decision-makers understand punishment and safety, and building new institutions and practices to transform and prevent interpersonal, communal, and social harm. With creative actions, mobilizations, teach-ins, and presentations to galvanize grassroots opposition, CR will continue to hold the city to its commitment to keep County Jail 4 at 850 Bryant empty, release people held in San Francisco’s jail system, and invest in the life-affirming resources that Bay Area communities need.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will include building and strengthening political education, movement campaign partnerships, and the Oakland Power Projects, CR will build Oakland communities’ capacity to resist police and policing as the default response to harm. They will highlight successful alternatives by identifying the current harms, amplifying existing resources, and developing new practices that do not rely on policing.

Showing Up for Racial Justice Ohio + Cleveland, OH

Building an Antiracist Majority to Transform Ohio's Criminal Legal System



Showing Up for Racial Justice Ohio (SURJ OH) is a volunteer network of chapters and individuals formed in 2015 to end white support for white supremacy and racism, following the leadership and direction of Black and Brown organizers and organizations in Ohio. Through campaign work, community organizing, mobilization, direct action, and education, SURJ moves white people to act as part of multiracial coalitions for justice with passion and accountability.

SURJ Ohio provides a space to build relationships, skills, and political analysis driving action for change. SURJ OH's role in the multiracial justice movement is to organize white people and white communities against racism and for collective liberation. They understand their role to be more than allies. They are partners in the work of dismantling white supremacy, white supremacist culture, and the resulting structural inequities that permeate every aspect of society. SURJ OH's work supports the development of multiracial networks and coalitions of everyday people who are winning transformative changes in their communities.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will be used to continue its partnership within local community groups toward building internal reliance on the expertise and lived experience of people in surrounding communities while allowing them to redistribute resources and knowledge to underserved populations.

The Black Sex Worker Collective ✦ New York, NY

The Black Sex Worker Collective Anti-Incarceration Project



The Black Sex Worker Collective (BSWC) was founded on the principles of Black liberation and is fully and permanently committed to Black leadership. Their work confronts white supremacy by dismantling it at its roots, intersecting with labor, immigration, reproductive rights, accessibility rights, gender equality, and sex worker rights. In this, they draw on the history of the civil rights movement, the principles that

leaders like Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Mary Ellen Pleasant, and Sylvia Rivera drew upon to liberate their people through education. BSWC emphasizes access, opportunity, and never cherishing their origins and culture.

BSWC understands why some members of their community prefer to use the term “survival sex work” but as a collective, they do not use that term. For Black sex workers, all sex work is survival, indeed all work is about survival under capitalism and they use the term “sex work” to honor their skills and tenacity no matter how much they get paid, where they work, or how they do it. Half of them have traded sex for housing, or food, and other basic needs. All of them live at or below the poverty level and are struggling to make ends meet.

With **Starving the Beast Circle** funding, BSWC will work to keep their community members out of jails and prisons by pressuring for compassionate release to avoid COVID-19, court support, and financial and emotional support. They will also advocate in partnership with their network of like-minded organizations in the region (NJRUA, BPPP, and Philadelphia groups) to contribute to policies regarding diversion programs from their informed perspective as a sex worker-led and Black-led organization.

Material Aid and Advocacy Program ✦ Cambridge, MA

Making a Material Difference: Organizing to Decriminalize Homelessness

The Material Aid and Advocacy Program's (MAAP) mission is to support and empower community members experiencing homelessness or living in poverty. They seek systemic solutions addressing the root causes of homelessness, poverty, and inequality. This includes material aid, facilitating access to resources, as well as advocacy and organizing.

At the core is the idea of providing a space free of criminalization, harassment, and judgment for unhoused people twice per week and at a bi-weekly organizing meeting. At MAAP, people access material aid of their choosing and resources they identify as necessary or important to meet their needs. People are treated with dignity and respect, and increasingly participants are taking more responsibility for running the space.

MAAP knows well that the barriers to engagement are incredibly high for their organizing community: people's daily struggle to survive living in public, losing their possessions and vital documents repeatedly during regular sweeps and then needing to replace their belongings, a tainted drug supply, and lack of basic resources including shelter, medical care, storage, bathrooms, and laundry.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will assist MAAP with meeting some of their constituents' material needs while building an organizing community.

Anti-Police-Terror Project + Oakland, CA

Mental Health First Oakland

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

A new mental health crisis response team is organizing in Oakland to create an alternative to the police

MH First, a program of the Anti Police-Terror Project, offers "socially competent" support.



The Anti-Police-Terror Project (AFTP) is a Black-led, multiracial, intergenerational coalition that seeks to build a replicable and sustainable model for eradicating police terror in communities of color. They support families surviving police terror in their fight for justice, documenting police abuses and connecting impacted families and community members with resources, legal referrals, and opportunities for healing. AFTP began as a project of the ONYX Organizing Committee.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will include MH First, a project of Anti Police-

Terror Project, which is a cutting-edge model for non-police response to the mental health crisis. The goal of MH First is to respond to mental health crises, including but not limited to psychiatric emergencies, substance use support, and domestic violence situations requiring victim extraction.

Central Ohio Freedom Fund + Columbus, OH

Central Ohio Freedom Fund: Solidifying Our Foundation



The Central Ohio Freedom Fund (COFF) disrupts the bail bonds industry by paying bonds on behalf of people using a revolving fund consisting of donations given by members of their local communities and people around the world. COFF advocates for the end of cash bail, eliminating pretrial detention, and the abolition of the prison-industrial complex.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will support their approach of focusing on paying the bonds for Black and Brown

people, regardless of the pending charges as an innovative approach to be applied statewide.

Their method seeks to address the racial disparity that promotes higher charges and bond amounts for Black and Brown people which is only now gaining more traction in the Midwest.

Ubuntu Village NOLA + New Orleans, LA

Campaign to End Juvenile Fees in Louisiana



Ubuntu’s mission is to provide programming that delivers social, economic, and transformational justice to children and communities, primarily working with young people involved in the criminal legal system and their families. Ubuntu’s program involves immediate triaging and connecting to services and longer-term educational planning, skills development, mentoring, and leadership development. This includes anti-oppression training, *Know Your*

Rights curricula, restorative parenting discussions, participatory action research, and history lessons.

While juvenile fee abolition enjoys broad support, Louisiana is one of the states hardest hit by the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic; any legislation perceived as reducing revenue is likely to receive scrutiny. Courts and probation departments will be most directly impacted by the elimination of juvenile fees and represent Ubuntu’s likely opposition. While the economic arguments against juvenile fees are strong (juvenile fees often cost more to administer and collect than can be covered by collections), an important part of overcoming lingering fiscal concerns is helping lawmakers and system stakeholders understand the magnitude of the harms juvenile fees impose on families and the extent to which juvenile fees undermine youth re-entry and rehabilitation. Ubuntu believes that highlighting the economic pain inflicted on families by juvenile fees is an effective counter and will be key to maintaining support for fee abolition. Despite economic fears, they anticipate being able to persuade system stakeholders that fee repeal is ultimately in the best interests of both the state’s juvenile system and Louisiana’s most vulnerable families.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will help strengthen the integrity of their stakeholder relationships, especially within the juvenile court system, supporting the design and implementation of their campaign to end juvenile fees.

New York Transgender Advocacy Group ✦ New York, NY

TGNC Advocacy Consultant



The New York Transgender Advocacy Group is a trans-led organization. Their mission is to advocate for more inclusive gender-based policies that benefit transgender and gender non-conforming and non-binary (TGNCNB) individuals through grooming community leaders, educating practitioners and influencing key policymakers. Their vision is to create an equitable society for all TGNCNB people.

Sex workers have always been on the frontlines within the social justice movement, mobilizing on all levels. **Starving the Beast Circle** funding will include amplifying conversations with the community and among sex workers. With the passage of the “Walking While Trans,” law it is more important that their focus is on implementation of the law, hosting town hall meetings within the community to gain input and support in determining efforts moving forward with addressing changes within systems that have caused harm to so many.

The New York Transgender Advocacy Group also plans to expand their TGNCNB Sex Worker Assistance Program from temporary response to full-time programming and begin identifying

and training future leaders from within this population in harm reduction advocacy. They plan to employ someone from that program as their designated TGNC Advocate.

Baltimore Safe Haven ✦ Baltimore, MD

Baltimore Safe Haven Community Outreach and Policy Change



Baltimore Safe Haven (BSH) believes that every transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer (TLGBQ) person should be able to live healthy, self-determined, and self-sufficient lives free from stigma, violence, and oppression. They achieve this by engaging those who are living in survival mode in their communities and challenging structural barriers to health, safety, and prosperity. BSH provides compassionate harm reduction and upward mobility services, advocacy, and community engagement that is respectful, non-judgmental, and affirms and honors individual power and agency.

BSH's mission is to provide opportunities for a higher quality of life for LGBTQ people in Baltimore City living in survival mode. They are in the process of building a system with community partners that will bridge all the services they offer and ensure that efforts are streamlined and not duplicated. The at-risk trans community of Baltimore is one of the most in-need and most deprived of these services and they are one of the most neglected constituencies in the state.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will be used to continue partnering with another of Maryland's leading nonprofits serving at-risk communities, FreeState Justice. Baltimore Safe Haven will in the next year construct and deploy the Coordinated Intake System (CIS). This innovative system, the first of its kind in Maryland, will create a centralized data intake and referral system to bridge the largest service providers and ensure that all clients approaching them for aid receive the full range of services they require with the least waste of time and energy.

O.D. Aid + Fort Worth, TX

Expanding Access to Harm Reduction in Fort Worth, Texas

O.D. Aid is a grassroots, community-based overdose prevention and harm reduction nonprofit in Fort Worth, Texas. They provide people who use drugs with the tools they need to protect themselves from HIV and hepatitis C, fatal overdose, and drug-related harms. They mobilize for systemic change to improve the lives of people who use drugs, people who engage in sex work, and people experiencing homelessness in our

community through radical resource redistribution, training, and direct action. Their syringe access program has 80-100 regular (weekly or bi-weekly) scheduled participants as well as standing hours and special events where guests can receive free Narcan and safer consumption supplies.



O.D. Aid offers regular overdose prevention programming through free drop-in Narcan training and scheduled teach-ins with direct service providers and care workers. Every week, they visit encampments with 30-40 people who use drugs and people experiencing homelessness with harm reduction, sexual health, and personal care supplies. They partner with Food Not Bombs Fort Worth to bring meals to participants. In 2020, they organized a rapid response to defund police, support community bail efforts, create and support coalitions, establish a Public Defender's Office and community-based HIV and hepatitis C screening. Above all, their team is driven by critical theory and the politics of solidarity and liberation.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will expand their programming, which is intended to respond and support the leadership, decision-making, and participation of people who use drugs and sex workers.

Dreamcatcher Initiative, Inc. + Fitchburg, MA

DreamCutz Men's Group

Dreamcatcher Initiative, Inc. (DCI) works to restore hope in the minds of their participating young people and community members. They empower their youth by providing hands-on prevocational experiences, transformative change toward leadership, and liberation. Their work connects young people to pathways of continued education through their relationship with the Massachusetts School of Barbering if their clients decide to continue with their learning. They equip participating youth in the system with knowledge and an understanding of the system so they can collectively break it down. Post-release, DCI builds a roadmap to assist them with connections and services needed to prevent their return back into the system and provide themselves with a fulfilling life. DCI teaches them the skills and know-how to explore entrepreneurship, coupled with exploring cultural equity and effective decision-making.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will focus on young people and strengthening their ability to thrive after a conflict with the law and to fight for authentic access to viable programs and services that liberate young men and women from the system.

HARM REDUCTION

Challenges, Inc. + Piedmont, SC

Syringe Services



The Challenges, Inc. syringe service works to provide clean supplies to people who use drugs to reduce the spread of disease and soft-tissue infections. They also distribute naloxone to prevent overdose deaths. Part of this work is what happens when a discriminated and marginalized population is met with compassion and respect.

Challenges will connect this otherwise marginalized population with resources like housing, employment, and health care. As the sole provider of this intervention in the state of South Carolina, they also advocate for people who use drugs in all settings including health care systems and the legal system.

Challenges will continue building relationships and partnerships with the jail and local police departments as well as other community members and organizations. They will continue working with the health department to push for legislative changes with the current harm reduction bill that was first proposed in 2020.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will improve their capacity to deliver resources, provide non-coercive harm reduction services, and address policy change that will improve the health and wellbeing of people involved in drug use or survival sex work toward reducing contact with the criminal legal system.

Offender Alumni Association + Birmingham, AL

Heroes in the Hood



The Offender Alumni Association (OAA) proposes an expansion of the current Project Safe Neighbor (PSN) strategy through the implementation of an OAA Credible Messenger “Heroes in the Hood” Initiative. This initiative works with approximately 25 young people, who are returning from the Atlanta Youth Development Campus (AYDC) or diverted through Juvenile Justice Court and living within the Metro

Atlanta PSN target communities.

Starving the Beast Circle funding will be used to provide pre-release and community-based services including comprehensive risk and needs assessments, pre-release planning, community support services, such as Credible Messenger, and cognitive-behavioral intervention. These young men are our future and future leaders in the community; if equipped and engaged properly, they will be instrumental in transforming their community and family dynamics.

Support our growing movement!

Learn about how you can become
more involved with CJI here:

www.cjifund.org/support-us

