

CIRCLE FOR JUSTICE INNOVATIONS
FreeHer Fund
Supporting Women, Girls, Transwomen, Transgirls & Gender-Nonconforming People

DEADLINE TO APPLY: February 9, 2021

CIRCLE FOR JUSTICE INNOVATIONS

FreeHer Request for Proposals and 2021 Grant Application Information

CJI's **FreeHer Funding Circle** is requesting proposals from eligible grassroots organizations led by women and girls working to end the criminalization and incarceration of women and girls, including trans women and girls, and gender-nonconforming people. CJI's **FreeHer Fund** is a partnership with **The National Council of Currently and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls**. The **FreeHer Fund** will support grassroots organizing that is based on the awareness of the current political environment's hostility toward the rights of women, girls, transwomen, transgirls, and gender-nonconforming people; is led by women, girls, transwomen, transgirls, and gender-nonconforming; people directly impacted by the criminal legal system; and is working to restore or expand the rights of currently and formerly incarcerated women, girls, transwomen, transgirls, and gender-nonconforming people.

BACKGROUND

The **Circle for Justice Innovations (CJI)**, which began in 2000, was borne out of a growing concern with prison expansion, mass incarceration, and the impact of racial disparities on oppressed and marginalized communities. The **CJI FreeHer Fund** is an innovative, participatory grantmaking circle comprised of community organizers, many of whom have experienced incarceration, donors, and donor-activists. We share power and a passion for supporting a meaningful, transformative, and systemic change of the criminal legal system, as well as a commitment to interrogating the elements of a **Just Sisterhood**. Understanding the limited funding available to the impact of the criminal legal system on women, girls, transwomen, transgirls, and gender-nonconforming people, this Circle was launched to create a new source of support for this critical work. CJI's mission is to end mass criminalization and incarceration in the United States.

Each year, we raise the grantmaking funds, convene the **FreeHer Fund** for political education, and determine our grantmaking focus. The **FreeHer Funding Circle** then builds consensus around the Request for Proposal (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 FreeHer applicants. However, there is also no maximum number of grants an organization may receive from CJI.

The CJI FreeHer application is available online and **does not require an invitation to apply**.

CJI's MOVEMENT PERSPECTIVE

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

CJI ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

CJI will **ONLY** fund the following:

- Organizations with a demonstrated commitment to the leadership of currently and formerly incarcerated women and girls, trans- and gender-nonconforming people; (incarcerated is defined as confinement in prison, jail, immigrant, juvenile or military detention, or a deportation facility);
- Organizations committed to achieving systems change through mobilization efforts and organizing, including changes in policies or institutions, such as parole, probation, or other systems of control; and
- Organizations with annual budgets of \$750,000 or less. If you are under the umbrella of a larger organization, please define your relationship with that organization.
- CJI does not fund direct assistance programs. However, CJI may fund organizations that, as part of a larger organizing strategy and/or leadership development plan, help provide necessities to communities in desperate need, i.e., PPE to people in prison or those recently released, shelter to people recently released from detention, jail or prison or to trans community members suffering housing insecurity, etc.
- **Organizations MUST meet the application deadline with all their required attachments. CJI will hold applicants strictly to the application deadline.**

CJI GENERAL FUNDING PREFERENCES

- Organizations operating in difficult political environments, e.g., in the presence of hostile political campaigns, antagonistic public figures, or repressive laws
- Organizations that develop new leaders, especially Black and Brown people and those who are marginalized within their communities, e.g., poor, homeless, or young people; elders, queer or trans people; people with a different racial, religious, or ethnic heritage; people living with mental illness or physical disabilities
- Leadership development that includes healing and/or personal transformation work, especially in communities that have endured generations of violence and trauma, and who may be currently enduring state violence
- Work in underfunded communities, especially in the south, midwestern states, Indigenous communities, undocumented or immigrant communities
- Organizations with a consensus or near consensus-inclusive decision-making process for

FreeHer Funding Priorities *(not restricted to the following)*

- **Bail Moratorium, Sentencing Reform & Transformation of Systems Supervision**
 - Ending the abuse-to-prison pipeline; ending patriarchal policies that inadequately protect women, girls, transwomen, transgirls, and gender non-conforming people from abuse and violence; and those that criminalize them for self-defense.
 - Efforts to decriminalize drug use and provide community-based alternatives and treatment for women, girls, transwomen, transgirls, and gender non-conforming people.
 - Ending Cash Bail and arbitrary fines and fees
 - Abolition of immigrant detention, family separation, and ICE deportations
 - Transformative changes in systems of supervision for people released from prison or jail (probation and parole)

- Transformation of Youth Justice and Family Court proceedings
- Reforming “Felony Conspiracy” laws and their disparate impact on women
- Work that ends the incarceration of caregivers for minors, elders, and the differently-abled, except in cases of a clear threat to the safety of others
- Organizing efforts that end extreme sentencing norms or mandates and/or provide relief from harsh sentences.
- Increasing clemency opportunities for women, especially elders and those with medical conditions
- Ending Life Without Parole (LWOP) sentences
- **Conditions of Confinement**
 - Addressing the physical and mental health of women, girls, transwomen, transgirls, and gender non-conforming people in prison, jail, and detention, including counseling, vaccinations, medical testing, medication, and hormone treatment, etc.
 - Ending the abuse-to-prison pipeline and all violence against women, such as rape, physical and sexual abuse, segregated/solitary housing of women, girls, transwomen, transgirls, and gender-nonconforming people in prison and detention
 - Work that guarantees basic human rights to and humane treatment of women, girls, transwomen, transgirls, and gender-nonconforming people, including the provision of basic sanitary and hygienic supplies to women and girls in confinement
 - Work that helps ensure placement in facilities (prisons, detention centers, treatment facilities) with proximity to family members
- **Restoration and Reunification**
 - Organizations whose work addresses gender-based violence, discrimination or abuse against women, girls, transwomen, transgirls, and gender-nonconforming people who have been incarcerated or detained, including the innumerable collateral consequences of incarceration, such as discrimination in housing, employment, education, voting, and parental rights.
 - Organizations that develop new leaders, especially from women, girls, transwomen, transgirls, and gender-nonconforming people marginalized within the prison or jail environment.
 - Restoration of parental rights
- **Economic Justice and Autonomy**
 - Promoting economic opportunities in growing industries, e.g., Free Energy for Free Women including wind, solar and hydroelectric energy
 - Mutual aid as part of a larger organizational strategy, e.g., cash assistance, eviction and foreclosure protection, entrepreneurship, cooperatives, home industries, and street economies
 - Employment training opportunities for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women, girls, transwomen, transgirls, and gender-nonconforming people
 - Removal of barriers to employment and professional licensing, such as barber or cosmetology licenses
 - Removal of arbitrary fees and fines: for license restoration, mandated incarceration, parole and probation; expungement clinics and official documentation including DACA Clinics
 - Access to affordable physical and mental health care (Health Justice)
- **Reproductive Justice**
 - Ending the criminalization of reproductive rights; uninformed, coerced, or forced sterilization; conditional, coerced, or forced use of birth control.

- Providing birth control and reproductive education to women and girls in confinement
- Providing adequate medical education, physical exercise, and other kinds of support to pregnant people in custody, especially during labor, including doulas during birth, and the nursing of infants

FreeHer Application Process and Timeline

- **January 8, 2021 – FreeHer Eligibility Quiz is open**
- **January 14, 2021 – FreeHer RFP Webinar** (webinar will be recorded and available on our website while the RFP is live)
- **February 8, 2021 – FreeHer Eligibility Quiz Deadline**
- **February 9, 2021 – FreeHer Application Deadline**
- **April 28-30, 2021 – FreeHer Grants Meeting**

1. Maximum grant request amount is \$25,000.

2. Applicants must first fill out an **ELIGIBILITY QUIZ**. The Eligibility Quiz can be found [here](#). The eligibility quiz expires on **February 8, 2021**. If you are deemed eligible to apply on February 8th, you will still have one day to complete your application.

3. Eligible organizations will be sent a link to **the full application on Submittable**. If there are technical questions about the application process, please contact support@submittable.com or call (855) 467-8264, or email Elana McGovern, CJI Grants Management Associate at elanam@cjifund.org for guidance.

4. Please make sure all required fields (indicated with a red asterisk*) are filled in before you submit your application. If nothing happens when you click “submit,” review each question to ensure all required fields are filled.

5. 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, CJI Program Director, at tinar@cjifund.org **BEFORE** the deadline.

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

In Solidarity,

The Program Team
Circle for Justice Innovations | CJI Fund