

CIRCLE FOR JUSTICE INNOVATIONS

Funding Grassroots Organizations to End Mass
Incarceration & State Violence



The Circle for Justice Innovations at NEO Philanthropy announces: Starving the Beast Fund Supporting Decriminalization, Decarceration, and Community Safety

DEADLINE: September 21st, 2020

The **Circle for Justice Innovations (CJI) and Open Society Foundations** are excited to fund community-based options that will reduce incarceration as a response to criminalized behaviors including drug use and related activities, sex work, and other survival behaviors. This funding collaboration is intended to improve the capacity of community-based organizations to deliver resources, provide harm-reduction services, and address policy change that will limit police interactions around mental health, homelessness, and consenting adult behavior. We support harm reduction practices that are non-coercive and entirely outside of the criminal legal system, as opposed to those that occur as a result of an arrest or other system contact. Our goal is to broaden community education and encourage activism to challenge the still-powerful War on Drugs and its hyper-criminalization and incarceration of communities of color and impoverished communities.

GOALS AND ROLES

The Circle for Justice Innovations (CJI) at NEO Philanthropy is committed to the end of criminalization and resulting incarceration, driven in no small part by a failed drug war predicated on punishment for drug-related activity, intended to target and devastate communities. Communities marginalized by race, class, housing status, HIV status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and citizenship status bear the brunt of the impact.

CJI believes integrating activists and directly impacted leaders into decision-making processes is a much more effective way to fund organizations. Under the direction of CJI, activists and staff will review all eligible applications and select the grant recipients in December 2020. The Starving the Beast (STB) Funding Circle engages as a truly diverse and innovative grant-making panel comprised of people with a history of incarceration, drug policy experts and advocates, and individual donors, who share a passion for meaningful, transformative, systemic change of the criminal legal system – especially as it relates to drug policy.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Organizations that

- have a registered 501(c)3 or fiscal sponsor.

- include the **leadership of people who have been directly impacted by drug use**, related activities, and/or sex work, including their family members.
- have budgets of **\$750,000** or less. If you are under the umbrella of a larger organization, please define your relationship with that organization. Projects organized by currently incarcerated people **ARE** eligible to apply.
- are committed to achieving **systems change** through organizing, including changes in policies or institutions, such as police, parole, probation, or other systems of control and state violence.
- Projects organized by street economy entrepreneurs **ARE** eligible to apply
- Organizations that received an STB grant in the prior round or have received funding from other CJI programs and meet the criteria for this program **ARE** eligible to apply again. Application to this program does not disqualify an organization from consideration in any other CJI annual grants program.

HOW CAN AN ORGANIZATION USE THE FUNDS?

Proposed activities should be responsive to the needs of hyper-policed communities, providing opportunities to gain the tools and networks to support those facing the greatest risk of incarceration. The following are a few examples of how grantees can use this funding. This is NOT an exhaustive list:

- Hire a coach or trainer to help design an organizing strategy for local constituencies of criminalized drug activity, sex workers, family members, or others targeted by policing.
- Enhance stipends or paid expenses to include more survivors of the War on Drugs, family members, and community members living in poverty in the design or evaluation of programs to support decriminalization and promote health and safety.
- Provide individuals most deeply engaged in user communities with the information and resources that will enhance safety and provide options, including education and training on and provision of naloxone and Truvada.
- Develop a plan for and or implement overdose prevention sites which provide options and resources addressing a range of issues that may include fentanyl testing, naloxone use, trauma support and mental health, and housing and food provision
- Organize to overturn penalties for drug-related homicide laws made applicable to accidental overdose fetuses and the criminalization of abortion.
- Provide community education and develop support to honor the dignity of those affected by the War on Drugs and develop alternatives to criminalization and incarceration.
- Organize to end asset forfeiture/seizure laws and challenge the exorbitant portions of City and State budgets allocated to liability insurance for law enforcement misconduct, neglect, and corruption.
- Organize to strengthen Good Samaritan laws in existing states and to expand them into states where they do not, including intrastate travel.

Process and Timeline for Grant Decisions

Completed applications must be submitted no later than **September 21st, 2020 at midnight EST**. CJI will manage the application process. Grant selection will occur through consensus by CJI's Starving the Beast Circle of activists, donors and survivors of the War on Drugs. The Eligibility Quiz must be completed [here](#) to assess eligibility to apply.

Download the budget template [here](#) . (this link requires you to download the document before inputting budget information)

If you received an STB grant in 2019, you would need to complete the progress report [here](#) for your application to be considered for funding in the 2020 docket.

Prospective applicants can register [here](#) for the STB RFP Review Webinar scheduled on August 17th, 2020 at 2 pm, EST (1 pm CT, 12 pm, MT, 11 am PT). You can also schedule calls with Tina Reynolds to ask questions related to the RFP by emailing tinar@cjifund.org to schedule an appointment before the RFP deadline (**September 21st, 2020**).

Grants between \$15,000 and \$25,000 will be awarded through a competitive application process. Ongoing funding is not guaranteed. **Individuals and single-person LLCs are NOT eligible.**

Timeline:

AUGUST 10th, 2020: RFP RELEASE DATE

AUGUST 17th, 2020: RFP REVIEW WEBINAR (2:00PM EST)

SEPTEMBER 18th, 2020: ELIGIBILITY QUIZ DEADLINE

SEPTEMBER 21st, 2020: APPLICATION DEADLINE

DECEMBER 6th – 7th, 2020: GRANTS MEETING

JANUARY 4th – 8th 2020: DECLINATION FEEDBACK CALLS

JANUARY 15th, 2020: CJI ACCEPTANCE LETTERS SENT

In an effort to strengthen the movement, CJI provides debrief sessions with applicants that did not receive a grant. This is intended to increase general knowledge about the grantmaking process and to share information with organizations that will help with future applications to CJI or any other funder. Therefore, organizations that did not receive a grant are encouraged to schedule a debrief with CJI in a timeframe that will be announced with the grant decisions.

If you have technical questions about Submittable, contact support@submittable.com or (855) 467-8264.

In Solidarity,

The Program Team
Circle for Justice Innovations