



## LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

### 2021 Grant Application Information and Request for Proposals

Circle for Justice Innovations' Leadership Circle requests proposals from grassroots organizations working to build community power and transform the current U.S. criminal legal system. CJJ believes that formerly incarcerated and directly impacted movement leaders and their organizations, working at the grassroots level, must be at the forefront of determining the tactics and policies that will move us forward. We hope to support activism and energy that promotes restorative/transformational justice, alternatives to incarceration, decarceration, an end to criminalization and state violence and—the ultimate goal—building power directly in communities.

CJJ defines **movement building** as ongoing collaboration both within and across communities intended to build power and eradicate core systems of injustice. Collaborations may include work between multiple grassroots organizations and/or work between such organizations and individuals or groups currently working with transparency and integrity inside the institutions we seek to transform.

### CJJ BACKGROUND

CJJ is a Black woman-led, participatory grantmaking organization that has been funding grassroots organizations in the fight against mass incarceration and state violence for over 20 years. Our participatory grantmaking model brings frontline activists together with progressive-minded donors to collectively make decisions around funding priorities and grant allocations. We currently have four such grantmaking Circles, each focusing on a different area of work in the movement: CJJ's flagship Leadership Circle is engaged in movement-building; Starving the Beast (STB) decreases police interaction and funds diversion from the criminal legal system and sentencing alternatives; FreeHer Circle supports women, girls, and LGBTQIA-led organizations working to address the unique ways these communities are impacted by violence, incarceration, detention and deportation; and Strategic Opportunities for Support (SOS) Rapid Response Fund meets emergency needs and provides flexible funding for urgent movement actions.

Across all of our work, CJJ provides general operating grants that prioritize supporting leaders who have been directly impacted by the U.S. criminal legal system or by other oppressive state structures. We elevate their voices because we value their first-hand knowledge about the systems we seek to change. They are also the people best equipped to shut down and transform those systems to make real change in our communities.



## **FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR 2021**

**CJI's Leadership Circle is seeking to fund** organizations engaged in the movement to identify, define, and create solutions to systems of oppression and the current criminal legal system. We fund alternatives outside of the current legal and cultural systems of oppression, prioritizing those that empower communities to lead their own alternatives and create place-based solutions. In supporting the crucial work of building infrastructure that replaces the current system, which is rooted in racism and inequity, CJI also prioritizes groups enhancing the safety of communities that are victims of state-sponsored violence (both overt and insidious), those affected by the criminalization of protests, and those working toward community healing. We will support the crucial work of building infrastructure that replaces the current system, which is rooted in racism and inequity.

CJI's Leadership Circle seeks to fund organizations working to eradicate injustice and transform the current criminal legal system by addressing issues including, but not exclusive to:

- State-sanctioned violence and police militarization, including
  - Excessive use of force and brutality
  - Violence directed at exploited communities (i.e., missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, violence in Black and Brown communities, abuse to prison pipeline, and family separation)
- School-to-prison pipeline and youth justice

Additionally, the CJI Leadership Circle seeks to fund organizations whose work to build power and safety within their own communities includes:

- Creating community-based alternatives to policing
- Developing and empowering future leaders
- Building economic power among historically disadvantaged communities
- Promotion of harm reduction and development of community-based drug treatment and overdose options
- Decriminalization of and community solutions to houselessness
- Building community-based options for mental health

CJI acknowledges that many communities are already creating solutions and building power in ways we may not have named here. We have included examples within our priorities to share work we have funded in the past, but we encourage all organizations working toward a world without prisons and the threat of state violence to apply. We are excited to learn more about your work.



## CJI FUNDING PREFERENCES

### Things We Like to See

- Organizations that **develop new leaders**, especially from people who are marginalized within their own community
- Organizations **that address discrimination against or abuse of people who have been incarcerated or detained**
- Organizations working in the **U.S. Southern states, Indian country, and/or rural areas**
- Organizations with a clearly **identifiable and transparent decision-making process** that includes constituents/members
- Organizations that engage in **innovative** collaborations, building alliances across diverse backgrounds and common interests

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## APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process is online and **does not require an invitation to apply**.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

CJI will **ONLY** fund the following:

- Organizations with a **demonstrated commitment to including the leadership of people who have been incarcerated** (defined as confinement in prison, jail, immigrant detention, juvenile or military detention, or deportation facility), and/or **others who have been directly impacted by the system**, including family members of incarcerated people
- Organizations committed to **achieving systems change through organizing**, including changes in policies or institutions, such as parole, probation, or other systems of control
- Organizations with **budgets of \$750,000 or less**. If you are under the umbrella of a larger organization, please define your relationship with that organization.
- CJI will consider previous grantees **ONLY IF** they have **provided a CJI Progress Report** with information about their most recent CJI-funded work
- CJI does not fund direct-service programs **unless** they are connected to a larger organizing strategy and/or leadership-development plan, or if they are providing basic necessities to communities in desperate need.



- **Organizations MUST meet the application deadline with the submission of ALL required attachments.** To accommodate an increased number of proposals brought on by an open application process, CJI will hold applicants strictly to the published application deadline.

## **PROCESS AND TIMELINE**

The **deadline** for this application is **TUESDAY, JULY 20, 2021 11:59 PM PDT**. The deadline for the **Eligibility Quiz is Friday, July 17, 2021 NOON EST**. Grant decisions will be made by the CJI Leadership Circle, which convenes in late **September 2021**. Notification of grant status will begin in **October 2021**.

All applications are read and reviewed by a Pre-screen Team comprised of staff, activists, and donor representatives. Applications fitting the criteria are then advanced to the members of the Circle for review.

1. Applicants must first complete an **ELIGIBILITY QUIZ**. The Eligibility Quiz can be found [here](#).
2. Eligible organizations will then be sent a link to **the full application on Submittable**. If there are technical questions about the application process, please contact [support@submittable.com](mailto:support@submittable.com).
3. Complete the **full application on Submittable** by the deadline of **July 20<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 PM PDT**.

If you have questions about your organization's eligibility or require clarification about the meaning of an application question, you are encouraged to reach out to Elana McGovern at [elanam@cjifund.org](mailto:elanam@cjifund.org) at least **ONE WEEK BEFORE** the deadline.

**We will host a webinar to review and answer questions about the application process on June 23rd, at 3:30 pm EDT. Registration is required, and you may register [here](#).**