



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the grantmaking criteria?

The Fund supports grassroots groups that engage in organizing and advocacy efforts ***to end cash bail, transform pretrial justice, and build power in communities most impacted by incarceration.***

Successful applicants will include groups that:

- Work authentically with constituencies most impacted by mass incarceration (with a particular interest in supporting groups led by those directly impacted by the system).
- Demonstrate a clear power-building and leadership-development strategy that meaningfully engages directly impacted communities in defining problems, solutions, and actions.
- Engage in bail reform efforts that advance decarceration and are connected to a broader and holistic vision of reform. The Fund will consider requests for support both to advance policy reforms and to ensure effective implementation of reforms already adopted.
- Are based in jurisdictions with momentum and strong partnerships among groups.
- Have an explicit, demonstrated commitment to racial, economic, and gender justice.

Are there additional funding priorities?

In addition to the criteria above, the Fund prioritizes supporting innovative grassroots efforts to end money bail and transform pretrial justice that align with the following goals:

- Decriminalizing poverty
- Dramatically reducing the number of people incarcerated in jails
- Advancing transformative, community-based models of justice
- Securing justice and equity for low-income communities of color most impacted by incarceration, including women and LGBTQ people
- Elevating the leadership of those most directly affected by the criminal justice system

What type of activities does the Spark Justice fund support?

Grassroots organizing and leadership development in the communities most impacted by incarceration are core to the work we look to support, but the range of specific

strategies/activities that grantees might undertake could be very broad. Examples of the range of strategies that current grantees engage in include, but are not limited to, the following:

- multi-strategy campaigns, including campaigns that incorporate bail reform into a broader demand for jail closure and reinvestment of resources out of incarceration and into communities
- local and/or state policy advocacy
- monitoring and oversight of policy implementation
- coordination with litigation
- participatory defense work
- participatory research
- piloting innovating alternatives to prosecution and incarceration
- court watch programs
- bail out tactics leveraged for broader systems transformation
- District Attorney accountability strategies
- coalition building
- media and communications
- civic engagement strategies

This list is meant to provide examples only. We encourage proposals that are focused on using various strategies, including innovative and untested approaches.

Who is eligible to apply for funding from the Spark Justice Fund?

Grassroots advocacy and organizing groups that:

- are independent 501(c)(3) organizations or fiscally sponsored groups;
- work at the local and/or state levels;
- meet the grantmaking criteria and align with the Fund goals and priorities above;
- are typically underfunded and overlooked by philanthropy.
- We have a particular interest in supporting grassroots groups that are led by individuals with personal experience with the criminal justice system.
- Note: Applications to support coalitions leading campaigns will be considered.

The Spark Justice Fund does NOT fund:

- direct services work that is not connected to an advocacy/organizing agenda
- individuals
- government entities
- international projects

How can organizations apply to the SJF?

Interested organizations can submit an application through the Borealis grant portal. Instructions for accessing the portal are available on our website at: <http://bit.ly/SJF2019loi>

What is your timeline and process for making grant decisions?

We will begin accepting letters of inquiry on August 8, 2019. **The deadline for submitting LOIs is September 9, 2019.** The letter of inquiry (LOI) is the first step in the process. A committee comprised of staff and external advisors will review LOIs and determine which groups will be invited to submit a full proposal for funding. The timeline is as follows:

September 9, 2019:	LOIs due
November 2019:	Invitations to submit full proposals will be sent to selected groups.
December 2019:	Full proposals due from invited groups
February 2020:	Grantees notified

What does the Spark Justice Fund provide to grantees?

- Two-year, general operating support grants for grassroots organizing groups, in most cases. When project support is awarded, it is structured to be used flexibly for an organization's criminal justice work.
- Grants and coaching support for organizational development and capacity-building;
- Technical assistance and peer learning activities to foster deeper field coordination;
- Resources to respond to timely opportunities.

What are the grant sizes?

Spark Justice provides two-year core grants, generally in the range of \$75,000-100,000 per year, though these amounts might vary depending on the outcome of the review process. Supplemental organizational development grants of at least \$15,000 are also provided to groups.