



## SPARK JUSTICE FUND CALL FOR COVID-RELATED RAPID RESPONSE PROPOSALS

**Accepting Applications Now Through October 20, 2020**

The [Spark Justice Fund at Borealis Philanthropy](#) invites interested grassroots organizing groups working to **end cash bail, transform pretrial justice, and build power** in communities most impacted by incarceration to submit proposals for rapid response funding to meet the needs arising out of the current COVID-19 pandemic in jails and communities.

### ABOUT SPARK JUSTICE

The Spark Justice Fund (SJF) is a donor collaborative housed at Borealis Philanthropy that supports grassroots organizing groups in localities and states around the country. SJF provides both financial and capacity building supports to groups that are typically overlooked and underfunded despite doing visionary work on the frontlines of change.

The Fund's long-term vision is to:

- End money bail and transform pretrial justice in order to decarcerate, decriminalize poverty, and secure justice for low-income communities of color, including for women, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, and other marginalized populations;
- Strengthen the capacity of grassroots organizing groups rooted in the communities most impacted by the criminal legal system to lead the movement for its transformation;
- Elevate the leadership of those most directly impacted by the criminal legal system.

Current donors to the Spark Justice Fund include the Art for Justice Fund, Blue Meridian Partners on behalf of the Justice and Mobility Fund, Ford Foundation, Galaxy Gives, Kelson Foundation, Loud Hound Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, NoVo Foundation, Schusterman Family Foundation, and an anonymous donor.

### ABOUT THIS FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The purpose of this funding is to **help grassroots organizing groups that are working to transform pretrial justice to meet urgent needs arising out of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in jails and communities**. Given the grave harms facing people in jails due to COVID and the wide-reaching impact the pandemic is having on grassroots groups and the communities in which they work, we define "COVID-related" needs broadly. We will consider supporting any needs arising out of the current pandemic as long as they help groups advance their goals of

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ending cash bail, reducing jail populations, and promoting alternative community-led visions of justice in their jurisdictions.

Funding can be used both for strengthening organizational infrastructure and for substantive campaigns. While this list is not exhaustive, some examples of such COVID-related needs could include:

- Accelerating work to secure the immediate release of people from jails, including work to respond to arrests and jailing of people protesting police violence
- Developing alternative, community-led services and supports
- Deepening campaigns to end cash bail and advance other pretrial decarceration practices/policies
- Working on campaigns to close--and divest from--jails and invest instead in communities most impacted by incarceration
- Providing mutual aid and healing justice supports
- Strengthening organizational infrastructure (such as using funds for purchasing technology, enhancing digital security, addressing pandemic-related staff needs, or other leadership/professional development and organizational development needs.)

We know that in addition to responding to the COVID pandemic, groups are urgently focused on organizing and activism against police brutality. ***We welcome applications from groups who are working at the intersections of policing and jails. For this particular grant opportunity, however, we unfortunately cannot fund proposals exclusively centered on policing,*** which is the focus of our separate Communities Transforming Policing Fund (CTPF). For more information about CTPF, please email [ctpf@borealisphilanthropy.org](mailto:ctpf@borealisphilanthropy.org).

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & PRIORITIES**

Both current Spark Justice grantees and those who have not yet received Spark Justice funding are eligible to apply.

To be eligible for rapid response funding, groups must:

- Be an independent 501(c)(3) or be fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) organization
- Work authentically with constituencies most impacted by incarceration. The Fund is particularly interested in supporting groups led by individuals most directly impacted by the criminal legal system.
- Have an explicit, demonstrated commitment to racial, economic, and gender justice that is reflected in the organization's leadership and staffing and in how it conducts its work

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- Demonstrate a clear power-building and leadership-development strategy that meaningfully engages directly impacted communities in defining problems, solutions, and actions
- Engage in efforts to end cash bail that are connected to a broader decarceration strategy and to advancing a holistic vision of criminal justice transformation that centers community-led models of justice.

Priority consideration will be given to:

1. Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)-led organizations
2. Organizations led by individuals who have been directly impacted by the criminal legal system
3. Ongoing campaigns in jurisdictions with particularly timely opportunities for change
4. Groups who do not receive significant support from national foundations

#### WHAT WE DON'T FUND

The Spark Justice Fund does not fund:

- Direct services work that is not connected to advocacy/organizing work
- Individuals
- Government entities
- International projects

#### GRANT AWARDS AND BENEFITS

The Fund will provide general operating support grants to provide groups with maximum flexibility. We anticipate most grants will be in the range of \$15,000-\$25,000, with the possibility of a small number of grants of up to \$50,000. Amounts will be determined based on the nature of the request and available resources.

In addition to financial support, the Spark Justice Fund provides all grantees with ongoing capacity building opportunities, including regular learning webinars on key issues related to their work, opportunities for peer sharing with other grantees, and weekly newsletters that compile field news, updates, resources, and funding opportunities.

#### APPLICATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Applications are being accepted **now through October 20, 2020**. We will review applications and make grant decisions on a **rolling basis** until all funds are expended. We will notify groups of award decisions within 2-4 weeks of submission.

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Given the rolling process and depending on how many requests we receive, please note that it is possible that all funds will be disseminated before October 20 and that groups submitting applications closer to the application closing date can't be considered. **Therefore, eligible groups are encouraged to apply sooner than later.** We will close the online portal as soon as the funds have been fully disseminated.

#### HOW TO APPLY

- Please review these [frequently asked questions](#).
- Download the [Rapid Response Grant Applications Instructions](#).
- Once you've read the materials, [visit our online application portal](#) to apply.

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