

MEMO

TO: US Programs Staff
FROM: The Criminal Justice Fund
DATE: August 11, 2009
SUBJECT: Anticipated Grant Recommendations, Docket III, September 2009

The Criminal Justice Fund is considering the following 11 grants for inclusion on Docket III, September 2009, totaling \$1,895,000.

A Better Way Foundation (ABWF), \$100,000 general support grant over one year. ABWF leads two reform coalitions in Connecticut dedicated to shifting current drug policy from a paradigm that prioritizes incarceration to one that prioritizes public health, treatment and public safety, including: The Connecticut Alliance, which consists of service providers (e.g., drug treatment counselors and case managers), non-profit administrators (e.g., those who run housing programs), city government staff (e.g., those who coordinate city-sponsored needle exchange), neighborhood leaders, former police chiefs and mayors, and public health and social work graduate students and the Coalition for Medical Marijuana, which consists of physicians, nurses, patients, and advocates. ABWF also provides technical assistance to six local grassroots groups across the state of Connecticut. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interest in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by fostering new approaches to drug policy.

Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), \$150,000 project grant renewal over one year to continue its Justice Reinvestment work promoting reentry supportive housing in New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and the District of Columbia. Continued OSI funding will enable CSH to continue facilitating collaboration across criminal justice, human services, and housing sectors, including flexible, integrated funding streams, to create and operate affordable reentry housing linked to supportive services for people returning from jail or prison. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interest in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by attacking the excessive and economically destructive costs of incarceration and by decriminalizing vulnerable populations such as people suffering mental illness and homelessness.

Critical Resistance (CR), \$125,000 general support grant renewal over one year. CR continues to organize statewide training with community groups around corrections spending and challenging prison expansion. It also organizes local and statewide gatherings of formerly incarcerated people, their family members and supporters to opposed prison expansion in California. Working with the Prison Law Office and private attorneys, it is also supporting lawsuits concerning prison funding and conditions. Nationally, CR also continues to advance its policy agenda of reducing reliance on incarceration by working to cultivate new leadership and support movement-building activities. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interest in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by attacking the excessive and economically destructive costs of incarceration and by eliminating harsh and unjust sentencing policies and practices.

Ella Baker Center (EBC), \$250,000 general support grant renewal over two years. EBC's projects include: Books Not Bars, which promotes alternatives to youth incarceration in California; Silence the Violence, which combines youth leadership and cultural engagement with a strong policy agenda to reduce rates of violent crime in the Bay Area and has enjoyed

tremendous successes and growing public support for systemic changes since its launch in 2006; the Campaign for Green Collar Jobs; which creates job opportunities for low income communities and communities of color by engaging diverse stakeholders to launch training programs, align green employers, and advocate for public policies that promote clean energy, green business, and green jobs training; and Soul of the City, which promotes an active solution-based model—by means of civic engagement and leadership development—for ensuring public safety. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund’s interest in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by attacking the excessive and economically destructive costs of incarceration, ending the treatment of children as adults in prosecution and sentencing, and by eliminating unreasonable barriers to successful reentry.

Grassroots Leadership (GL), \$120,000 general support grant renewal over one year. GL is a multi-racial team of organizers who support Southern community, labor, faith, and campus organizations working to put an end to abuses of justice and the public trust by develop and directing campaigns to abolish for-profit private prisons and all immigrant family detention. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Funds interest in attacking the excessive and economically destructive costs of incarceration and reform polices that criminalize immigrants.

Green For All (GFA), \$75,000 project grant renewal over one year to continue highlighting the Civic Justice Corps in its public education and advocacy campaign to create a national Clean Energy Corps, which we believe may offer a promising mechanism for sustaining the CJC and taking it to scale. Continued OSI funding will enable GFA and its allies to continue efforts to secure local, state, and federal commitments to job training, job creation, and entrepreneurial opportunities in the emerging green economy for poor people with criminal records. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund’s interest in reducing mass incarceration by reforming parole and probation policies and practices and in reducing harsh punishment by eliminating unreasonable barriers to successful reentry.

National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (dba Corps Network), \$150,000 project grant renewal over one year to continue providing oversight and programmatic and technical assistance to Civic Justice Corps (CJC) demonstration sites across the U.S. An OSI grantee since 2006, the Corps Network is an important advocate for youth and conservation corps and has recently become a valued member of the national coalition seeking major federal government investment in green collar job creation and training, which could help grow and sustain the CJC. Continued OSI funding will enable the Corps Network to continue: supporting, monitoring, and connecting the CJC demonstration sites to one another for peer support and information sharing; connecting the CJC to national green collar job creation efforts; and providing the CJC the necessary flexibility and credibility to secure renewed funding from the U.S. Department of Labor and other federal agencies. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund’s interest in reducing mass incarceration by reforming parole and probation policies and practices and in reducing harsh punishment by eliminating unreasonable barriers to successful reentry.

The Foundation for Criminal Justice (FCJ) (*as fiscal sponsor* for the **National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers** [NACDL]), \$225,000 general support grant over one year (co-funded with the National Security and Human Rights Campaign) to support both organizations’ missions to ensure justice and due process for persons accused of crime, to foster integrity and independence of the criminal defense profession and promote the fair administration of justice. NACDL has been at the forefront of reforms to improve public defense, enact sentencing reform, address racial and ethnic disparities, and oppose over-criminalization and the evisceration of fundamental constitutional rights. In the past year, NACDL has taken a lead role in challenging

the prolonged detention of terrorism suspects at Guantanamo Bay and seeking procedural protections for these detainees. This grant will further the National Security and Human Right's Campaign's goals of raising awareness about countering the government's efforts to undermine the constitutional and human rights of persons charged with terrorism-related activities in the name of national security. The grant simultaneously advances the Criminal Justice Fund's goals of eliminating racial disparities and securing a fair and equitable system of justice.

National Legal Aid and Defender Association, \$400,000 over two years to support federal reform efforts around indigent defense services. This grant to the National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA) will allow it to apply the lessons of successful statewide right to counsel reform to take advantage of the unique opportunity to generate federal government action to address the crisis. Equally importantly, the investment will fund a strategy to strengthen the national, state and local infrastructure into a more potent force for indigent defense and criminal justice into the future. As a result of reform efforts in the state of Michigan, United States Representative John Conyers (Chair of the House Committee on the Judiciary) requested a personal briefing about the indigent defense problems in Michigan and the rest of the country. The Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security has subsequently held two hearings on the issue. With the attention of an influential congressional member and rare congressional focus on the issue, combined with new leadership in the Administration, a window has been opened for federal action. NLADA proposes to engage in a multi-pronged federal campaign that utilizes and mirrors all of the strategies and resources that it has brought to bear on the state level through the National Indigent Defense Collaborative (NIDC), a partnership of national organizations engaged in reform efforts. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interest in eliminating racial disparities and ensuring fair administration of justice by improving indigent defense services and systems.

Partnership for Safety and Justice (PSJ), \$200,000 general support grant renewal over two years. PSJ operates four programs, including: the Safety and Sentencing Program, which promotes safe and sensible sentencing reform as well as alternatives to incarceration by developing approaches to public safety that build safe communities, are fiscally responsible, and reduce our reliance on prisons; the Crime Survivors for Community Safety program, which has been effective at neutralizing "tough on crime" advocates in Oregon by organizing survivors of crime and violence to promote progressive responses to the needs of survivors and to support criminal justice reform that reduces future violence without increasing prosecution and incarceration; the Beyond Barriers program, which focuses on eliminating the civil and social barriers people with criminal records experience; and the Prison Program, which advocates for increased access to quality programs within prisons and against the implementation of policies that further erode the constitutional or human rights of incarcerated people and provides people in prison and their families information on issues directly affecting them. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interest in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by attacking the excessive and economically destructive costs of incarceration, eliminating harsh and unjust sentencing policies and practices, and eliminating unreasonable barriers to successful reentry.

Women's Prison Association and Home (WPA), \$100,000 project grant renewal over one year to provide continued support for the Institute on Women and Criminal Justice. Continued OSI funding will enable WPA to serve as a much-needed, authoritative national voice and resource on women in the criminal justice system and avenue for promoting the participation of formerly incarcerated women in public debate about incarceration policies. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interest in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by decriminalizing vulnerable populations such as women and children.