

Criminal Justice Fund

Memo

To: Ann Beeson and U.S. Programs Staff

From: Leonard Noisette and Criminal Justice Fund Staff

Date: 12 February 2010

Re: Prospective Criminal Justice Fund Docket I Grant Recommendations

The Criminal Justice Fund is considering recommending the following 18 grants on or before Docket I, April 2010. These grants would advance our goals of reducing mass incarceration, reducing harsh punishment, eliminating racial disparities and ensuring a fair and equitable justice system in the United States, and strengthening voices to establish a new drug policy paradigm. Several of these grants represent collaborative/co-funding partnerships between the Criminal Justice Fund and one or more other U.S. Program Funds. We look forward to discussing with you other possible opportunities for collaboration/co-funding should they arise.

Protex A Network for Progressive Texas (dba Texas Criminal Justice Coalition—TCJC), \$400,000 general support renewal grant over two years. TCJC is an Austin-based organization that works to reduce Texas' over-reliance on incarceration and to lessen the negative impact of state policies and practices on families through policy research and analysis, building effective statewide coalitions, and educating stakeholders by promote effective management, accountability, and best practices that minimize the entry points into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. TCJC operates five projects, including the *Juvenile Justice Initiative*, which promotes resources for community-based alternatives to incarceration and supports a network of family members of currently and formerly incarcerated young people; the *Public Safety Project*, which conducts research and public education that address best practices in law enforcement to equip communities and law enforcement agencies to work together to implement fair and effective police practices; the *Fair Defense Project*, which advocates for increased resources for an indigent defense system that provides timely and quality representation; the *Solutions for Sentencing & Incarceration Project*, which advocates for cost-effective solutions to reducing mass incarceration, including community-based diversions, treatment options for substance abuse and mental health problems, and efficient probation and parole strategies; and the *Tools for Reentry*, which connects formerly incarcerated people with educational, training, housing, and other opportunities. This grant would advance our interests in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by attacking the excessive and economically destructive costs of incarceration, eliminating harsh and unjust sentencing practices, fostering new approaches to drug policy, eliminating unreasonable barriers to reentry, ending the treatment of children as adults in prosecution and sentencing, and by decriminalizing vulnerable populations such as people suffering mental illness and homelessness. The grant would also advance our interest in eliminating racial disparities and securing a fair and equitable justice system by improving indigent defense services and systems.

Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), up to \$700,000 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 and to replicate this work in Colorado, Washington, Indiana, and Kansas. 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 our interest in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by attacking the excessive and economically destructive costs of incarceration, eliminating unreasonable barriers to reentry, and by decriminalizing vulnerable populations such as people suffering mental illness and homelessness.

Grassroots Leadership, Inc. (GL), \$125,000 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 end to abuses of justice and the public trust by developing and directing campaigns to abolish for-profit private prisons and immigrant family detention, stop prison expansion, and end the 287(g) program, which allows local law enforcement agencies to contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to act as ICE agents. Through its offices and corresponding chapters in Charlotte, North Carolina; Southaven, Mississippi; Montezuma, New Mexico; and Austin, Texas; Grassroots Leadership directs projects that use a combination of field and organization capacity building assistance, grassroots organizing, direct action mobilizing, public education, media advocacy, and policy reform advocacy. This grant would advance our interest in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by attacking the excessive and economically destructive costs of incarceration and reforming policies that criminalize immigrants, as well as our goal of eliminating racial disparities and securing a fair and equitable justice system by reforming the policies and practices of law enforcement agencies. The grant would also advance the Equality and Opportunity Fund's interest in stemming the erosion of the civil and human rights of immigrants and in linking immigration to broader policy issues, and the Transparency and Integrity Fund's concern with the impact of privatization and its corrosive and undermining effects on the role of government.

The Tides Center (Justice Strategies project—JS), \$250,000 unrestricted project support grant renewal over two years to conduct research, public education, and provide technical assistance to grassroots organizations, advocates, and policymakers on issues of reforming police policies and practices, downsizing prisons, immigrant detention, private prisons, and alternatives to incarceration. Through tailored and expert policy analysis and research, Justice Strategies—directed by veteran researchers and Soros Justice Fellow Judy Greene—promotes more humane, just, and cost-effective approaches to criminal justice, juvenile justice, and law enforcement. This grant would advance our interests in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by attacking the excessive and economically destructive costs of incarceration, eliminating harsh and unjust sentencing practices, eliminating racial disparities, reforming policies that criminalize immigrants and in securing a fair and equitable justice system by reforming the policies and practices of law enforcement agencies. The grant would also advance the Equality and Opportunity Fund's interest in stemming the erosion of the civil and human rights of immigrants and in linking immigration to broader policy issues.

National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (dba Corps Network), \$200,000 project grant renewal over two years to continue providing oversight and programmatic and technical assistance to Civic Justice Corps (CJC) across the United States. CJC affirmatively recruits young people with criminal convictions and provides opportunities to learn about and work in the emerging green economy through projects designed to improve the places where they live and lead to living wage green collar jobs and careers. An OSI grantee since 2006, the Corps Network is an important advocate for youth and conservation corps and a valued member of the national coalition seeking major federal government investment in green collar job creation and training, which could help grow the CJC. Continued OSI funding will enable the Corps Network to continue supporting, monitoring, and coaching the CJC sites, connecting the sites to one another for peer support and information sharing, and connecting the CJC to national green collar job creation efforts. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interest in reducing mass incarceration and reducing harsh punishment by reforming parole and probation policies and practices and by eliminating unreasonable barriers to successful reentry.

The Correctional Association of New York (Correctional Association), \$200,000 general support renewal grant over two years. The Correctional Association engages in policy development, advocacy, public education, and coalition-building to create a more fair, efficient, and humane criminal justice system and a more safe and just society. It operates four projects, including the *Juvenile Justice Project*, which seeks to reorient the juvenile and criminal justice systems away from a punitive approach toward a stronger emphasis on community-based prevention and alternatives to jail and prison for young people; the *Prison Visiting Project*, which carries out the Correctional Association's unique legislative authority to monitor prison conditions in New York State correctional facilities; the *Public Policy Project*, which previously coordinated the Drop the Rock Campaign to repeal the Rockefeller Drug Laws and now focuses on ensuring Rockefeller reforms are implemented successfully; and the Women in Prison Project, which addresses the effects of the New York's criminal justice policies on women and their families. This grant would advance our interest in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by attacking the excessive and economically destructive cost of incarceration, fostering new approaches to drug policy, and ending the treatment of children as adults in prosecution, sentencing and detention.

FACTS Education Fund (FACTS), \$100,000 general support renewal grant over two years. FACTS is a Los Angeles-based grassroots organization that educates, engages, and mobilizes communities most directly impacted by California's draconian sentencing policies to promote a fair and just criminal justice system and an end to California's Three Strikes Laws. This grant would advance our interests in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by attacking the excessive and economically destructive costs of incarceration, eliminating harsh and unjust sentencing practices, and fostering new approaches to drug policy.

Safe Streets/Strong Communities (Safe Streets), \$150,000 project renewal grant over eighteen months to strengthen the organizational capacity of the organization as it transitions into new leadership and to continue public education, organizing and mobilizing constituent communities, and advocacy for criminal justice policies and practices in New Orleans that are smart and just and responsive to constituent community interests and needs. OSI funding will enable Safe Streets to engage in strategic planning to ensure organizational stability and sustainability, to redesign and re-launch its campaign to downsize the Orleans Parish Prison and bring the jail back under the authority of the City, and to continue its campaign to end abuse and corruption within and bring transparency and accountability to the New Orleans Police Department. This grant would advance our interests in reducing mass incarceration and harsh punishment by attacking the excessive and economically destructive costs of incarceration and in eliminating racial disparities and securing a fair and equitable justice system by reforming the policies and practices of law enforcement. The grant would also advance the Transparency and Integrity Fund's interests in ensuring transparency and effective government oversight via independent watchdog organizations and protecting the integrity of government institutions and the Democracy and Power Fund's interests in organizing and mobilizing most directly affected communities in a long-term social change strategy emphasizing policy reform, systems change, and shifting public debate.

Drug Policy Alliance (DPA), \$4,000,000 general support renewal over one year (From the U.S Drug Policy Reform budget). A longtime OSI grantee, The Drug Policy Alliance plays a leadership role in promoting a just society in which the use and regulation of drugs are grounded in science, compassion, health, and human rights; in which people are no longer criminalized and punished for what they put into their own bodies; and in which the fears, prejudices, and punitive prohibitions of today are eliminated. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's goals of reducing the U.S. reliance on incarceration and harsh punishment in the United States by fostering new approaches to drug policy; decriminalizing vulnerable populations; and strengthening civil society investments and infrastructure.

Harm Reduction Coalition (HRC), \$400,000 general support over one year (\$250,000 from USP Drug Policy Reform budget, \$100,000 from Criminal Justice Fund budget, and \$50,000 from IHRD Drug Policy Reform budget). HRC challenges the stigmatization of people who use drugs and advances policies and programs that help people address the adverse effects of drug use including overdose, HIV, hepatitis C, addiction, and incarceration, through policy analysis, advocacy, public education, and technical assistance to service providers. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund, OSI-Baltimore's and the International Harm Reduction Development Initiative's shared interest in developing and enriching the drug policy reform debate by engaging public health and medical experts to press the public health benefits nationally and internationally of needle exchange.

Color of Change (CoC), \$100,000 project support grant over two years (from USP Drug Policy Reform budget) to educate, engage, and mobilize individuals and communities of color around drug policy reform. This grant—our contribution to a larger grant being coordinated by the Democracy and Power Fund—would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's, OSI-Baltimore's and the International Harm Reduction Development Initiative's shared interest in developing and enriching the drug policy reform debate by engaging in the drug policy reform debate communities most directly impacted by the war on drugs, especially communities of color.

The Tides Center (Break The Chains project—BTC), \$50,000 project grant renewal over six months (\$25,000 from USP Drug Policy Reform budget and \$25,000 from IHRD Drug Policy Reform budget) to continue educating and engaging communities disproportionately affected by punitive drug policies, particularly Black and Latino communities, about the negative consequences of existing policies and generate individual and collective activism in support of drug policy reform. OSI funding will enable BTC to continue planning SHAKE-TV, an online forum for multimedia programming focused on the consequences of and alternatives to the “war on drugs;” its Futures Up In Smoke project, which demonstrates how marijuana law enforcement policies disproportionately target minority youth in our nations' cities and undermine efforts to promote school retention and employability; its Plan Columbia: ¡Nunca Mas!, a collaboration with international drug policy reform individuals and organizations to document the negative impact of U.S. drug policies on the health and safety of Columbian Communities; and its efforts to document and highlight the impact of U.S. drug policies on women, the poor, and communities of color across the world. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's, OSI Baltimore's and the International Harm Reduction Development Initiative's shared interest in developing and enriching the drug policy reform debate by engaging the communities most directly impacted by the war on drugs, especially communities of color.

Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth (CFSY), \$170,000 project support over two years to coordinate state-based campaigns working to end the practice of sentencing youth to life in prison without parole (JLWOP). CFSY will work to strengthen existing and nurture emerging state-based efforts to end JLWOP by accomplishing the following: improve and facilitate communication and collaboration among national and state advocates; provide technical assistance and training to advocates; coordinate reform efforts with litigators; expand the national campaign by engaging new allies; and coordinate with advocates and litigators to respond to the Supreme Court's anticipated decisions in *Sullivan v. Florida* and *Graham v. Florida*. In review of these cases, the Court will address questions fundamental to the treatment of children in conflict with law in the United States. The outcomes of these cases are expected to provide a key moment of opportunity to move state-based JLWOP reform.

National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA), \$650,000 project grant over two years to support the National Indigent Defense Infrastructure Collaborative (NIDC), an initiative dedicated to developing a coordinated strategy to reform indigent defense systems on a state-by-state basis. These efforts include the National Indigent Defense Collaboration (NIDC), the National Defender Leadership Institute (NDLI), Justice Standards, Evaluation and Research Initiative (JSERI), and the American

Council of Chief Defenders (ACCD). Collectively, these initiatives will work to provide national leadership and management training for the public defense community; identify and address current gaps in public defense standards; provide states with comprehensive assessments and plans to guide state officials toward needed reform; develop a blueprint to address reform approaches to end the practice of “no counsel” courts; and advance indigent reform efforts in at least seven states.

Ohio Justice & Policy Center (OJPC), \$100,000 general support over two years to support the, a Cincinnati-based, nonpartisan, nonprofit law office that promotes evidence-based, cost-effective policies to address root causes of crime, decrease recidivism, and promote successful community reentry of formerly incarcerated individuals. OJPC seeks to empower the formerly incarcerated to become productive members of society; to remedy unconstitutional and dangerous conditions of confinement in Ohio prisons; and to reduce racial disparities throughout the Ohio’s criminal justice system. OJPC pursues these goals through direct client services, impact litigation, public education, policy research and advocacy, and leadership development programs: The *Second Chance Project* provides free legal services to adult and youth ex-offenders to help them become more productive members of the community. Its *Indigent Defense Reform Project* engages in education, leadership development, training, and policy reform advocacy to improve the indigent defense system and services in Ohio. *The Human Rights in Prison Project* brings impact lawsuits to achieve humane conditions of confinement for Ohio’s more than 50,000 adult and juvenile prisoners. OJPC’s *Student Practice Clinics* train third-year law students in best-practice litigation strategies for indigent defense representation and civil rights cases in federal and state court. Finally, the *Race and Justice Project* seeks to identify and eliminate racial disparity in the criminal justice system in four key areas: *School-to-prison pipeline, prosecutorial discretion, and capital punishment and Law enforcement.*

Public Interest Projects, \$200,000 over two years to support the Juvenile Life Without Parole (JLWOP) Sub-fund of the US human Rights Fund, a funder collaborative. The JLWOP Sub-fund supports the humane treatment of youth, targeting the U.S. as the only country in the world that continues to condemn youth as young as 13 to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. The Sub-fund currently supports grassroots organizations, legal service advocates and strategic communications, and provides technical assistance to its grantees. The Sub-fund acts as an important source of information for interested funders, as a liaison between the National Coordinator of the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth and the funding community, and coordinates philanthropic responses to urgent requests from the field.

Spitfire Strategies, \$160,000 project grant over two years to support Spitfire’s efforts to increase the communications capacity of advocates working to improve indigent defense systems in the United States. Spitfire will continue its strong working relationship with the National Indigent Defense Collaborative (NIDC) by increasing the communications knowledge and capacity of NIDC members and their access to specialized communications technical assistance. In particular, Spitfire will conduct national trainings and webinars for public defenders, as well as new allies spokesperson training designed to train non-expert community members to be credible spokespersons for indigent defense reform.

Northwestern University Center on Wrongful Convictions of Youth (CWCY), \$280,000 project grant over two years to support CWCY’s reform effort aimed at increasing the reliability of juvenile convictions and preventing the wrongful convictions of youth. Through research, organizing, training, litigation, and public education, the Center seeks to change the procedures and practices of police and prosecutors who interact with youth, particularly during investigations and interrogations. CWCY identifies, investigates, and litigates credible innocence claims of wrongfully convicted young people, provides resources and support for actors in the juvenile and criminal justice systems, and advocates for policy reforms that will decrease the likelihood that any youth will be wrongfully convicted.