

Memo

To: Aryeh Neier

From: Ann Beeson, Leonard Noisette, and CJF Staff

Date: 16 March 2009

Re: Docket I 2009 Recommendations, Criminal Justice Fund

For the first docket of 2009, the Criminal Justice Fund (CJF) recommends nine grants. Five of these grants are renewals in support of on-going activities previously funded by the CJF. Two are new grants to advance our strategies to reduce the use of incarceration, its collateral consequences and its negative impact on families. Two grants are to support our efforts to improve the operation of the criminal justice system and the quality of indigent defense services through improving access to counsel in misdemeanor prosecutions, and training public defenders practicing in the southern United States. All these grants would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's goals of ending the over-reliance on incarceration and harsh punishment; reducing the collateral impact of incarceration on those who are imprisoned, their families and communities; and improving the access to and quality of counsel for those facing prosecution.

Council of State Governments (CSG) - \$1,050,000 project grant over two years, to inform the crime policy agenda of the U.S. Congress and Administration; analyze the impact of school discipline policies on the criminal justice system in Texas; and provide capacity building funds. OSI funding will enable CSG to continue providing non-partisan research, technical assistance, and education to policymakers and advocacy organizations to inform the policy discussion around efforts to fund, implement, and reauthorize the *Second Chance Act* and the *Mentally Ill Treatment and Crime Reduction Act* and to inform policymakers about Justice Reinvestment and issues affecting children with incarcerated parents. Funding will also support the publication and dissemination of research on the impacts of school discipline policies on juvenile and adult justice system involvement in Texas. Finally, from our special JEHT Emergency Fund we will replace capacity building funding for the organization's Justice Center that was lost with the closure of the JEHT Foundation, this past December. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interest in reorienting the mission and resources of criminal justice systems to minimize incarceration and maximize successful reentry, decriminalizing vulnerable populations and increasing access to mental health care for people before and after prison, and promoting the rights and well-being of children whose parents are or were incarcerated.

Louisville Jefferson County Metro (Louisville) - \$100,000 project grant renewal over two years, to continue implementation of a reentry pilot in Louisville's Newburg neighborhood, which has entailed the ongoing development of a functioning network of service providers and marshalling support for neighborhood projects to redress structural impediments to successful resettlement after jail and prison. OSI funding will enable Louisville to refine program policies, procedures, and participant selection criteria, and increase the number of participants from 45 to 100, the target number to allow completion of an evaluation being conducted by JFA Associates (an OSI grantee). This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interest in reorienting the mission and resources of criminal justice systems to maximize successful reentry and minimize incarceration and fostering cross-sector and multi-agency government collaboration and accountability for reentry.

The Fortune Society (Fortune) - \$280,000 project grant over two years, to support its David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy's work in New York State, including public education and policy analysis, development, and advocacy to promote expanded alternatives to incarceration, successful reentry, and the restoration of voting rights to New Yorkers with criminal justice histories. OSI funds will enable Fortune to focus its efforts on increasing the availability of and access to Alternatives To Incarceration (ATI) programs throughout the state, removing unreasonable employment and financial barriers faced by people with criminal records, and expanding the right to vote for people not in a correctional setting but under supervision for a felony conviction in New York State. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interests in promoting alternatives to incarceration that emphasize rehabilitation and treatment and by promoting civic and political re-enfranchisement and economic inclusion.

Osborne Association (Osborne) - \$300,000 project grant renewal over two years, for its *New York City Initiative for Children with Incarcerated Parents* and *Longtermers Project*. OSI funding will enable Osborne to continue efforts in New York to protect the rights of children with parents in prison and improve the chances of parole release for people sentenced to long prison terms. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's goal of reducing the over-reliance on incarceration and harsh punishment and our interest in highlighting and reversing criminal justice policies that harm rather than help vulnerable populations.

WGBH Educational Foundation (WGBH) - \$50,000 project grant over one year, to conduct outreach and develop a supplemental website to promote the broadcast of *The Released*, a new Frontline documentary that follows the experiences of people with mental illness after release from prison and demonstrates how the lack of support services often contribute to their returning to prison. Frontline's broad-based educational outreach campaign, promotion strategies, and companion website (which contains extensive informational resources and opportunities for further viewer involvement) will enhance policy debates on the nation's treatment of the mentally ill. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's promoting cross-sector and multi-agency government collaboration and accountability for reentry, decriminalizing vulnerable populations, and increasing access to mental health care for people before and after prison.

Noisette Foundation (Noisette) - \$100,000 project grant over two years, to continue providing programmatic and technical assistance to the Lowcountry Civic Justice Corps (LCJC) in North Charleston, South Carolina, which has provided people on work release with service-learning opportunities in green construction and has made significant headway in promoting smart reentry policies locally and throughout the state. OSI funding will enable Noisette and LCJC to continue its Civic Justice Corps programming. This grant would advance the Criminal Justice Fund's interest in promoting public service and educational opportunities in and after prison and encouraging the civic responsibility and participation of people with criminal records in justice policy reform.

Southern Public Defender Training Center (Southern Center for Human Rights as fiscal agent) - \$150,000 project support over two years, to fund the Southern Public Defender Training Center, which, in partnership with public defender offices across the region, provides training to entry level and inexperienced public defenders in order to build a community of zealous, committed public defenders and raise the standards of representation for indigent defendants in the southeastern United States. The program was developed through a Soros Justice Fellowship to Jon Rapping, who continues to manage the program. This grant would advance CJF's goals of indigent defense reform and improving public defense.

Seattle University - The Defender Initiative - \$57,895 project support over 5 months, to implement the right to counsel in misdemeanor cases by creating targeted litigation to be applied in three focus courts, followed by two regional conferences and two national conferences to discuss and disseminate the work.

Project leader Bob Boruchowitz received a 2003 Soros Justice Fellowship in this area, and was the lead consultant of a project CJP funded through the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers to examine the growing problems of misdemeanor prosecutions throughout the country. This grant would advance CJP's commitment to ensuring access to counsel and reducing unfairness in the justice system.

New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty (NYADP) - \$150,000 renewal of general support, over two years, to maintain New York state's current de jure abolition of the death penalty by expanding public opposition to capital punishment, developing coalitions, and fostering a sustainable movement in support of abolition. This grant would advance CJP's commitment to abolition of the death penalty in the United States.