



Purpose: The Cleveland Foundation Criminal Legal Reform Request for Proposal

The purpose of this funding application is to direct resources to community and grassroots organizations, as well as advocacy networks and coalitions, that are focused on using systems-change and policy-oriented approaches to reform the criminal legal system. The system, which consists of police, courts, and correctional institutions, has historically prioritized punishment and incarceration as the primary public safety tools to promote law and order. Grant dollars will assist organizations and leaders, particularly those who have been justice or criminally legally involved, with dismantling criminal legal systems and practices that have historically harmed Black and minority people.

Overview: The Cleveland Foundation Criminal Legal Reform RFP Applicant Guide

Thank you for your interest in the Cleveland Foundation Criminal Legal Reform RFP. This RFP is part of a broader approach to address policies and practices in the criminal legal system that have a disparate and racist impact on Black people, communities of color and other vulnerable populations. We appreciate your leadership and the work you are doing in moving our community forward. In this application guide, you'll find the Criminal Legal Reform RFP Grant Application, Frequently Asked Questions, and a timeline. This information can be found on the Cleveland Foundation [website](#).



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Criminal Legal Reform RFP Application Questions

Section 1: Contact Information

Project Title:

Coordinator Contact Name (e.g. the person submitting the application and who will receive communications regarding the application's status by email):

- Coordinator Contact Email:
- Coordinator Contact Phone No.:
- Coordinator Contact Email Address:

Executive Director:

- Name:
- Email:
- Is this information correct? Yes/No

Project Leader Contact (Note: When using a Fiscal Agent, the Lead Organizer Contact represents the manager of the project for the partnership, coalition, or agency that is the focus of the request):

- Project Leader Email Address:
- Project Leader Phone Number:

Section 1: About Your Organization

1. Organization Legal Name (e.g. Organization, Coalition, or Agency receiving the funds):

Mailing Address (Applicant address)

- Street Address (including Apt. #), City, State, Zip, Organization's Website

2. Coalition, Partnership or Project Information (e.g., If the applicant is a fiscal sponsor for another group, please share the additional information if available):

- Organization, coalition or agency name that will be implementing the project:
- Website for the organization, coalition, or agency leading the work, if applicable:

3. Does your organization have an annual or operating budget of LESS THAN \$1.5 million?

- Yes/No. (Only organizations with a budget of \$1.5 million or less [averaged out over three years] are eligible for funding.)

4. Does your organization, network, coalition, or group focus primarily on criminal legal reform or have a portion of your work, mission, and goals dedicated exclusively to addressing criminal legal reform?

- Yes/No



5. Is your organization's primary mission to provide direct services or address individual's basic needs?
 - Yes/No

6. Around what policy issues does your organization focus and advocate for? (Please select **two** that are most applicable.)
 - Adult and/or juvenile probation and parole practices and policies
 - Courts and prosecutorial reform
 - Criminal sentencing
 - Ending wealth-based detention (including bail or bond reform)
 - Decarceration
 - Decriminalization
 - Immigration enforcement and detention
 - Jail and other corrections reform (including the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center)
 - Leadership development and capacity building for justice-involved individuals (adults and/or youth)
 - Pretrial diversion and detention
 - Police reform and accountability
 - Post-incarceration registration requirements (for people convicted of certain offenses)
 - Reducing collateral consequences for justice-involved individuals
 - Reduction of fines and fees (as a pipeline to incarceration)
 - Reducing barriers to individuals' community reintegration from jail or prison
 - Repeal of capital punishment
 - Restorative justice
 - Victims' rights and advocacy
 - Youth justice
 - Other:

7. How many full and part-time staff members, fellows, interns, or volunteers do you have working on criminal legal reform efforts?

8. In addition to the above, please share how many of the following you have working on criminal legal reform efforts:
 - # of coalition, group or network members
 - # of active community members
 - # of justice-involved ADULTS
 - # of justice-involved YOUTH
 - # of family members of justice-involved people



9. Service Population: Which geographical area aligns best with *or* is the target of your change efforts? Check all that apply:
- Cleveland – All neighborhoods
 - Greater Cleveland – Inner- and outer-ring suburbs
 - Cuyahoga County – Whole county
 - Geauga County
 - Lake County
10. Please describe the percentages of the community members that you engage in basebuilding, organizing, advocacy, policy efforts that are from the Black, Latino/a/x or Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, LGBTQ+, or Justice-involved (or history of justice involvement) communities. An ***example*** is below:
- a. Black (10%)
 - b. Latino/a/x or Hispanic (25%)
 - c. Asian or Pacific Islander ()
 - d. LGBTQ+ ()
 - e. Justice-involved (or a history of justice involvement) (25%)

Section 2: About Your Work

11. Mission, Vision, and Goals: What is your organization, group, coalition or network's mission, vision, and goals. Please describe in 300 words or less.
12. Overview: Include a brief overview of your ongoing or long-term projects and campaigns. If you are applying as a partnership or coalition, provide a brief description of each group or organization. Please describe in 300 words or less.
13. Priorities: What are your top priorities for criminal legal reform, transformation, or abolition? Please describe in 150 words or less.
14. Context:
- a. What part of the criminal legal system are you responding to and what specific local or state policy or systems change outcome(s) your organization is working to achieve? Please describe in 150 words or less.
 - b. How you are using systems change, policy, advocacy, movement building and organizing strategies to achieve your goals? Please describe in 150 words or less.
15. Involvement of justice-involved or directly impacted people:
- a. How does your organization, group, or coalition center justice-involved or directly impacted people in your work? Please describe in 150 words or less.
 - b. How do you grow and develop the leadership of justice-involved or directly impacted people and their families, friends, and allies? Please describe in 150 words or less.



- c. What leadership and decision-making roles do justice-involved or directly impacted people have within your group, organization, or coalition and the work you are applying for? Please describe in 150 words or less.
16. What is your current capacity and resources to implement the work you are seeking funding for? For example, in 150 words or less, you can describe how many organizational leaders, staff and volunteers you have committed to your systems change, policy, and advocacy work, and other sources of funding or in-kind support you have received.
17. Tell us about the work you are seeking funding for or how this grant will support your capacity building and operational needs to support your ongoing work. Please share in 150 words or less.
18. For coalitions and partnerships only: How did your groups decide to work together on this issue(s)? What is your history of collaboration, if any? What role(s) will each group/organization have in your proposed work?
19. How much experience do you or your organization, network, coalition have in criminal legal reform?
- Less than 1 year
 - 1 to 3 years
 - 4 to 6 years
 - 7 to 10 years
 - More than 10 years

Section 3: Use of Funds

20. Support Type / Requested Amount:
- \$25,000 or \$50,000
21. Below is a list of capacity building and operational categories in which you can apply funds to. Please select the top **two** areas you are planning on applying a majority of your funding request to:
- Collaboration development
 - Evaluation
 - Facilities and operations costs
 - Financial management
 - Information technology
 - Improvement of data or technology systems
 - Operational support
 - Capacity building
 - Staff salaries and benefits



- Hiring a justice-involved person for direct advocacy work
- Coalition or network-building
- Information technology (and upgrades)
- Strategic or long-term planning
- Public education campaigns and forums
- Direct mailings for organizing or base-building
- Print materials for door-to-door campaigns
- Restorative retreats and healing
- Leadership and management development
- Public education and narrative change communications and efforts
- Risk management / disaster planning
- Staff salaries
- Strategic planning or long-term planning
- Capacity building fellowship for BIPOC or justice-involved staff member
- Staff development and leadership training (as it relates to organizing, direct action, policy, advocacy, etc.)
- Other:

22. Requested Expenses:

Expenses	Cleveland Foundation Request (\$)	Other Funding	Line-Item Description
Please provide details for each line item in your project budget. Example: Salary and Wages - \$15,000 will support our Lead Organizer's salary and benefits. Wages were calculated as 30% of the Organizer's time at a salary of \$50,000.			
Salaries and wages			
Consultants			
Travel			
Equipment			
Office Supplies/Materials			
Postage/Mailing			
Indirect expenses (i.e., rent/occupancy, utilities, maintenance)			
Other – Ex. Issue campaigns, Organizing or direct action, or Engaging or other stakeholders			
TOTAL			

23. If awarded the grant, when would your organization begin proposed activities? (Choose One)

- Within 3 months
- Within 6 months
- Within 12 months
- Other



Section 4. Demographic Data

This section will collect information about the race of your Executive Director, Community or Coalition Leader, Leadership Team, Board of Directors (if applicable), and population served. This information is applicable to the awardee, not the fiscal sponsor.

24. Please indicate the Racial Demographic of Your Leader(s), Executive Director, Community or Coalition Team Member by selecting from a dropdown menu:

- White/Caucasian/European
- Black/African American/African
- Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx
- Native American / Indigenous
- Asian / Asian American / Pacific Islander
- Additional Ethnicities
- Unknown or Decline to State

25. If you have a Board of Directors, Advisory Group, or another oversight board, what is their racial makeup? (Please use percentages):

White/Caucasian/European	
Black/African American/African	
Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx	
Native American/Indigenous	
Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander	
Multiracial/Multiethnic	
Additional Ethnicities	
Unknown or Decline to State	

26. Racial Makeup of Your Leadership Staff and/or Volunteers (in percentages):

White/Caucasian/European	
Black/African American/African	
Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx	
Native American/Indigenous	
Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander	
Multiracial/Multiethnic	
Additional Ethnicities	
Unknown or Decline to State	

Section 5. Documents to Upload:



27. Board list (if applicable)
28. Organization budget (budget, 990 form or most recent audit)
29. Optional additional attachment pertinent to the project (1 attachment only)

Applicant FAQ Sheet

Timeline

- **March 24:** A 10 a.m. [information session](#) will be held at the MidTown Tech Hive.
- **March 29:** The online application opens at 9 a.m. Please continue to the Cleveland Foundation [website](#) for more information.
- **April 5 & 12:** A technical assistance workshop will be offered for applicants, please register for the **April 5** workshop [here](#); or the **April 12** workshop [here](#). If you are unable to attend the workshop, it will be recorded and made available later through our website.
- **April 6, 13, 20:** Three Grant Writing Assistance Sessions will be offered for eligible applicants. Registration links for each date is below:
 - o April 6: Register [here](#).
 - o April 13: Register [here](#).
 - o April 20: Register [here](#).
- **May 5:** The application deadline is May 5, and the application closes at 11:59 p.m.
- **May 19:** Applicants who are advancing to the first stage of the review process will receive notification.
- **June 1:** Applicants who are advancing to the final stage in the review process will receive notification.
- **Early July:** Notice and announcement of final funding decisions.

Eligibility

Who is eligible to apply?

Grants can only be made to organizations holding 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status with an operating budget of less than \$1.5 million. Organizations that do not currently have 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status are eligible to apply in partnership with a tax-exempt organization serving as a fiscal sponsor. Organizations based in Cuyahoga, Lake or Geauga counties and focusing on reforming the criminal legal system may apply.

Priority will be given to community groups from the Greater Cleveland region who are part of a criminal and social justice focused group, network, or coalition, and are led by or comprised of a person(s) with direct lived experience in the criminal legal system. Black-led organizations whose leaders have experience with criminally legally involved people are encouraged to apply. Even if an organization does not meet this priority criteria, their application will still be considered.



What is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and how can my organization obtain it?

501(c)(3) is a section of the Internal Revenue Code that describes the [requirements](#) for an organization to be considered tax exempt by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Organizations must [apply to the IRS](#) to receive 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Your organization must also maintain its tax-exempt status over time by following certain rules. Learn more about applying for, and maintaining, tax-exempt status [here](#).

The Cleveland Foundation can only make grants to organizations that are recognized as tax exempt by the IRS. If your organization does not yet have tax-exempt status, you may be able to apply for a grant using a fiscal sponsor.

What is a fiscal sponsor and how does that process work?

If you are doing criminal legal reform work, but your organization does not have tax-exempt status, you may be able to apply for a grant through a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is willing and able to serve as your fiscal sponsor. If you decide to apply with a fiscal sponsor, the sponsor will submit the application on your behalf and must indicate the sponsorship arrangement in the application. However, the application narrative responses should be written from the perspective of your organization. If the application is approved, the fiscal sponsor will receive the grant funds and distribute them to you. Check out these resources to learn more:

- [Fiscal Sponsorship for Nonprofits \(National Council of Nonprofits\)](#)
- [Fiscal Sponsorship: Who Does What? \(National Council of Nonprofits Infographic\)](#)

If you have specific questions about whether a fiscal sponsor is a good option for you to receive funding, please sign up for a Technical Assistance session.

Will any organizations be given priority?

The following groups will be given priority:

- Community members and leaders from the Greater Cleveland region who are part of a criminal legal and social justice-focused group, network, or coalition.
 - **Please note:** Any group *without* a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status may apply through a fiscal agent with a tax-exempt, nonprofit designation.
- Coalitions, organizations, agencies, and groups that are led by or comprised of a person(s) with direct lived experience in the criminal legal system.
- Black-led organizations whose leaders have experience with criminally legally involved people.

What do you mean by systems change and policy-oriented strategies?

The types of partners and organizations who would be a best fit for this funding are those using a systems-change and policy-oriented approach. We believe a systems-change approach is one that shifts the dominant institutions precipitating mass incarceration and encouraging more judicial-involvement for people of color, as opposed to supporting community-led and oriented strategies and alternatives. Another systems-change approach is creating alternative narratives, structures, systems, and solutions that respond differently from the status “quo” of incarceration. Building alternative structures and narratives could include structural, relational, or transformative changes.

- **Structural change** focuses on policies*, practices*, and resource flows*
- **Relational change** deals with power dynamics*, relationships, and connections* between different systems actors, including the community, government, civic and business leaders, and others.
- **Transformative change** rearranges mental models* that put forth incarceration and law enforcement as the only ways to achieve public safety.

*Each of these terms have been defined by Kania, Kramer, and Senge (2018) in *The Water of Systems Change*, and can be found on page 4 [here](#).

Does my organization have to be Black-led or does it need criminally legally involved or directly impacted people in leadership positions?

The benefit of having directly impacted or criminally legally involved people in leadership positions is to help organizations better identify which systems-based policies and practices impact overly represented populations in the carceral system, particularly Black people. People with lived experience in the adult and youth carceral systems can best recognize the administrative barriers to reform because of their lived experience. Their lived experience further assists them in connecting with historically marginalized communities who are naturally apprehensive to working with institutions, researchers, or elected officials who may not value their input outside of a research or electoral setting. Furthermore, employing criminally legally involved people to lead or be at the forefront of the movement shifts the power balance from allies to individuals most affected and harmed by incarceration.

Organizations that recognize and value the leadership of criminally legally involved and directly impacted people will prioritize their involvement in executive and senior leadership, and board membership. They will also have strategies that avoid tokenizing people with lived experience by appropriately compensating leaders and employees for their work, time, and contributions. Tokenism is most apparent when people with lived experience are asked to volunteer their time without adequate financial, emotional, and mental support to lead and carry out the work long-term. This can lead to frustration, burnout, and disengagement from the movement – as it does for many organizers who are not adequately supported. Entities that are committed to diverse representation in their leadership will tend to include people of diverse backgrounds and lived experiences.

Amount and Types of Grants

What are the funding priorities?

With the input of a 25-person advisory committee, TCF has created a strategy focused on eliminating policies and practices that further the mass incarceration of adults and youth in the Greater Cleveland region. To achieve this goal, our policy priorities are to:

- 1) **Reduce adult pre-trial detention** by supporting strategies that promote racial and income equity, diversion, and community-based alternatives to incarceration.



- 2) **Reduce youth incarceration** by encouraging criminal legal stakeholders to use community-based alternatives to incarceration for youth targeted for detention and decrease the total number of youths currently housed in the Cuyahoga County Detention Center.
- 3) **Improve systems alignment and connectivity** between pretrial services and community-based health systems to reduce the recidivism and unnecessary incarceration of people with mental and behavioral health illnesses.
- 4) **Improve and expand reentry services and community integration** for returning citizens through policy, advocacy, and legislative efforts.

While services and programming are important, this strategy aims for something broader. A focus on systems, policies, and practices is important because it will have the deepest and longest-term impact. Partners and organizations that are focused on a systems-change and policy-oriented approach are best suited for furthering these priorities.

What type of grants are available?

Applicants can apply for either a \$50,000 or \$25,000 grant, depending on the size of their organization and described need. A total of **five** \$50,000 grants and **ten** \$25,000 grants will be made available. For details on the different grant levels, see the answer to the question ‘How much should my organization apply for.’

How much should my organization apply for?

Use the categories below to determine which amount your organization would be in the best position for.

\$50,000 Grant Award

- The Cleveland Foundation will award **up to 5 grants** of \$50,000 each. Organizations will be best positioned to receive grants of this amount if they:
 - Engage in advocacy, policy, systems change, base building, or coalition work for criminal legal reform initiatives or change efforts, as opposed to direct service;
 - Have (or are in the process of forming) a strategic plan and policy agenda with specified goals and a clear mission and vision;
 - Have at least 2-3 staff members with organizing, advocacy, research, or policy experience;
 - Have an active board of directors or are in the process of forming their board of directors;
 - Can clearly demonstrate how receiving the grant will further their systems change or policy-oriented approaches, or build capacity to engage in more robust policy and advocacy efforts; and
 - Have funding from at least one or two additional sources.

\$25,000 Grant Award

- The Cleveland Foundation will award **up to 10 grants** of \$25,000 each. Organizations will be in the best position to receive grants of this amount if they:

- Primarily engage in advocacy, policy, systems change, base building, or coalition work for criminal legal reform initiatives, issues, or change efforts, as opposed to direct service;
- Have at least 1 staff member (or a strong core group of 2-3 volunteers) with combined organizing, advocacy, research, or policy experience of at least 1 to 2 years;
- Can clearly demonstrate how receiving the grant will build capacity to help develop a strategic plan, policy agenda, clearer focus on criminal legal reform-related work and additional staff or operational capacity.

How can the funding be used?

Systems Change and Policy/ Advocacy Work

Applicants using a systems-change approach to shift dominant institutions or create new and alternative narratives to incarceration might consider using the funding to:

- Advocate for jurisdictions to employ non-police or judicial responses to individuals experiencing housing instability, mental illness, drug addiction, and other situations that make individuals vulnerable.
- Employ innovative narrative shifts that educate the community on alternative ways to view youth who commit crimes.
- Teach youth to organize and become civically engaged on criminal legal issues.
- Train resident leaders to lead issue campaigns and engage with key stakeholders who hold power within the criminal legal and carceral systems.
- Create a long-term policy agenda in partnership with community members, and/or engage in or provide leadership and policy training for criminally legally involved people on the policy priorities listed in this RFP, among many other ideas.

Others that are focused on changing dominant systems and institutions might focus on:

- Reforming the everyday carceral structures that shape the status quo.
- Eliminating laws and practices that increase incarceration or criminalize new behaviors.
- Decreasing penalties for criminalized behaviors that pose no threat to public safety.
- Supporting efforts to create judicial alternatives that minimize harm to communities.
- Teaching community members to organize, advocate, and engage with elected and civic leaders.

There are many ways to influence carceral systems, policies, and practices and the above examples are but a few ways of achieving those changes.

Capacity Building

Candid.org states: “Capacity building can help make an organization more focused, efficient, and productive,” and this, “makes it easier to attract the money, leadership and visibility that nonprofits need to thrive.”

What are some examples of capacity activities and components?

The [Free Management Library](#) describes a host of capacity building activities, including:



- Assessments
- Board development
- Collaboration planning
- Conflict resolution
- Convening
- Evaluation
- Financial management
- Information technology
- Leadership development
- Legal services
- Management development
- Networking opportunities
- Staffing
- Strategic planning
- Networking opportunities
- Organizational development
- Peer learning
- Research
- Staffing (selection, development)
- Team building

This is not an exhaustive list but is meant to provide some insight into the types of capacity building activities that the Cleveland Foundation is willing to support. Learn more about capacity building activities [here](#).

General Support

General support awards are available for operating support and furthering other systems-change and policy-oriented work. Purposes include but are not limited to unrestricted operating support; leadership development and training; financial support for training, consultation, conflict resolution and/or restructuring; healing, restoration, and retreats for staff; strategic planning and development; rapid response to unforeseen political opportunities and/or needs; public education including nonpartisan forums, debates, legislative breakfasts, and panels; nonpartisan drives and door-knocking campaigns; and more.

Multi-Year Awards

Applicants may be renewed for a second-year grant if there is available funding and they have demonstrated a clear focus and strategy in their proposal and first year's work. There is no need to apply separately for a multi-year award.

How many grants will the Criminal Legal Reform RFP Committee be making?

The Cleveland Foundation expects to award a total of \$500,000 in monetary grants. We expect to award five grants of \$50,000 and 10 grants of \$25,000.

If I apply for \$50,000 and don't get it, will I be considered for another grant amount?

It is possible for an applicant to be considered for a lesser amount. However, due to the limited nature of funding, this is not guaranteed. Applicants who are not awarded through the RFP can apply through the Cleveland Foundation's general funding process in the future.

How will my application be evaluated?

All applications will be evaluated by a three-person review team comprised of community leaders and Cleveland Foundation program officers and staff. A scoring rubric will be used to determine how well proposals describe the organization and their systems change, policy, advocacy and organizing approaches, activities, and community mobilization efforts for civic engagement.



About Capacity Building for Systems Change and/or Policy-Oriented Approaches

Does funding have to directly support advocacy and policy approaches or can grant dollars be used for other organizational needs that are necessary to systems reform work?

We understand that organizations and groups need the people and resources to do systems work. They also need training and skills development to grow operations and capacity over time. We are providing flexible funding options for organizations that want grant dollars specifically for an issue campaign, community engagement, or operational support and capacity building. Clearly articulating your organization or group's need and how you will use the funding is important.

Can my systems-reform work on criminal legal reform differ from your funding priorities?

Our current funding priorities are ending wealth-based detention, youth justice, improving community reintegration for returning citizens through policy reforms, and addressing systems alignment in mental health services between pretrial and community-based systems. These priorities do not cover the gamut of the criminal legal system and should not restrict an applicant who has chosen to focus on other reform priorities and strategies. Any applicant that focuses on criminal legal reform through systems change, policy and advocacy is welcome to apply.

Application Process

When is the deadline to apply?

Applications will open on March 29, 2023. The deadline to apply is May 5, 2023, at 11:59 p.m.

What am I required to submit?

Everyone must apply through the Cleveland Foundation [website](#) and submit:

- A board of directors list (if applicable);
- A recent budget (or a filed IRS-990 form or recent audit); and
- One other optional supporting document of your choice that demonstrates your work, portfolio, expertise, or achievements. Résumés and CVs are acceptable optional documents.

What if my application is not funded?

A decline for now is not a permanent decline. If your application does not get funded in this round of grants, we hope you will re-apply through the Cleveland Foundation's general application process.

Can I meet one-on-one with anyone to help me get my application ready?

We know that many organizations will have questions about how to best prepare their application. While we would love to meet with each organization individually, we have learned from our other committee-advised and fund-driven application processes that we do not have the capacity to meet with everyone. We've designed a series of grant writing assistance opportunities and a technical assistance workshop (that will be recorded) to ensure that each organization can get its questions answered.



We kindly ask that you attend the technical assistance workshop and take advantage of virtual grant-writing assistance workshops available to you before reaching out to the Cleveland Foundation directly. Please find the **dates** and **registration** for the virtual workshops **online** via the **TCF Blog**.

I have additional questions. How can I learn more?

Due to the volume of applications, the Cleveland Foundation is unable to meet with every applicant one-on-one. If you are seeking guidance on your application, we kindly ask that you attend a technical assistance workshop and take advantage of the virtual grant writing workshops. You can sign up for technical assistance and grant writing workshops via the blog posted on the **TCF website**. Workshops will be recorded if you are unable to make any of the scheduled times.

For RFP questions or information, contact: Katrice Williams, Senior Criminal Justice Fellow, at kwilliams@clevefdn.org. For application or technical questions, contact: grantsmgmt@clevefdn.org.

Other questions about the Criminal Legal Reform RFP

Why this RFP and why now?

The purpose of this RFP is to provide support to grassroots and community organizations that are focused on reforming the complex problems found in the criminal legal system, including the police, courts, supervision systems, and correctional institutions.

It calls for all of us to move from only addressing direct services and programming for individuals to also focusing on the broader systems, policies, and practices that further mass incarceration and criminalization through our criminal legal institutions.

It can be a difficult mental shift for a society that attributes a person's incarceration to their personal defects and character, rather than a confluence of social, economic, and political factors, to target systems change directly. However, by looking past the misnomer of "personal responsibility" for every person who is arrested, we can help our society and local community to better respond to social determinants of poverty, health, and safety. To do this, we must support the organizations and communities who want alternatives to incarceration, reform, and less criminalization, and empower them to engage their elected and civic leaders to take those steps.

Will this RFP be offered next year?

This is the foundation's first RFP to support community and grassroots organizations using systems change, policy and advocacy approaches to reform the criminal legal system. Because of this RFP's novelty, we can only guarantee funding for 2023. However, applicants may be renewed for a second year of funding if they have demonstrated a clear focus and strategy in their proposal and can document their work in the first year of funding. There is no need to apply separately for a multi-year award.



Am I still eligible to apply for the foundation's traditional grantmaking?

Tax-exempt organizations are always welcome to apply for the Cleveland Foundation's regular grantmaking cycle if they have been declined through this RFP process. For groups and entities that are not 501(c)(3) organizations, they can explore either obtaining 501(c)(3) status or obtaining a fiscal sponsor and re-applying for funding later.

I want to help. Can I contribute to this RFP next year?

The foundation encourages individual donors, philanthropic foundations, and companies to contribute to the foundation's criminal legal reform strategy and grantmaking efforts. Donations of any amount are welcomed, and all contributions are eligible for a charitable donation.

If you are a Cleveland Foundation fund holder and would like to recommend a grant from your fund, please log into the donor portal or contact your donor relations officer for instructions.



The Cleveland Foundation Criminal Legal Reform RFP Scoring Rubric

<u>Main Category</u>	<u>Subcategories</u>	<u>1 Below Expected Level</u>	<u>2 At Expected Level</u>	<u>3 Above Expected Level</u>
<u>Alignment with goals</u>	<u>Geography</u>	The applicant is physically outside of or does not work in the Cleveland Foundation's geographical footprint of Cuyahoga, Lake, or Geauga counties.	The applicant is physically located within the Cleveland Foundation's geographical footprint of Cuyahoga, Lake, or Geauga counties, but primarily works or organizes outside of the Greater Cleveland area.	The applicant is physically located within the Cleveland Foundation's geographical footprint of Cuyahoga, Lake, or Geauga counties, and works or organizes within the Greater Cleveland area.
	<u>Mission</u>	The applicant's mission, goals, and vision are not or only tangentially focused on criminal legal reform.	The applicant's mission, goals, and vision are somewhat focused on criminal legal reform.	The applicant's mission, goals, and vision are primarily focused on criminal legal reform.
	<u>Priority Consideration</u>	The applicant has neither persons with direct lived experience nor community member represented in their strategy, planning, and organizing efforts.	The applicant has at least a person with direct lived experience represented in their organization and/or community member representation and voice in their strategy, planning, and organizing efforts.	The applicant has several persons with direct lived experience and community members represented in their strategy, planning, and organizing efforts.
	<u>Focus on Criminal Legal Reform Part I</u>	The potential grantee does not focus on the criminal legal system as defined as the police, courts, and any kind of detention facility including jails, prisons, immigration detention facilities, juvenile centers, etc.	The potential grantee focuses on at least one policy issue related to criminal legal reform.	The potential grantee focuses on two or more policy issues related to criminal legal reform.
	<u>Focus on Criminal Legal Reform Part II</u>	The potential grantee primarily focuses on providing direct services or programming and does not engage in systems change work.	The potential grantee employs at least one system change, policy, or advocacy strategy to impact its criminal legal reform goal in Cuyahoga, Lake, or Geauga counties, and/or focuses on statewide criminal legal policies that would have a direct impact in the region.	The potential grantee mostly or exclusively uses systems change, policy, or advocacy strategy to impact its criminal legal reform goal in Cuyahoga, Lake, or Geauga counties, and/or focuses on statewide criminal legal policies that would have a direct impact in the region.

	<u>Involvement of Justice-Involved or Directly-Impacted People, Children and/or Families</u>	The potential grantee does not engage justice-involved or directly impacted people or their families in their strategy or planning processes, or outreach to the community.	The potential grantee engages at least two justice-involved or directly impacted people or their families in their strategy or planning processes, or outreach to the community.	The potential grantee engages several justice-involved or directly impacted people in their strategy or planning processes, or outreach to the community.
	<u>Leadership of Justice-Involved or Directly Impacted People</u>	The potential grantee does not have any justice-involved or directly impacted person (or people) in a leadership position, including employment, volunteer, or board/advisory committee positions.	The potential grantee engages at least two justice-involved or directly impacted people or their families in a leadership position, including employment, volunteer, or board/advisory committee positions.	The potential grantee engages several justice-involved or directly impacted people in a leadership position, including employment, volunteer, or board/advisory committee positions.
<u>Capacity Building Needs</u>	<u>Capacity to apply funding</u>	The potential grantee does not have the organizational or human capacity to apply the grant to its stated purpose.	The organization might have the organizational and human capacity to apply the resources to its stated purpose, but it is questionable.	The organization has the organizational and human capacity to apply the grant to its stated purpose.
	<u>Clarity of Need</u>	The potential grantee has not identified how it will use the grant to build capacity or support its operational or other needs, including to support its campaign, systems change, policy or advocacy efforts.	The potential grantee has identified at least one way it will build capacity utilizing the grant, or how it will use the funds to support its operational needs, or other efforts around systems change, policy and advocacy.	The potential grantee has identified one or more ways it will build capacity utilizing the grant, and/or support its operational needs, or other efforts around systems change, policy, and/or advocacy efforts.
	<u>Budget</u>	The potential grantee has an unclear or ambiguous budget.	The potential grantee has some idea of how they will use grant funds to support their budget.	The potential grantee has a clear idea of how they will use awarded grant funds to support their budget.
	<u>Ability to leverage collaboration to increase impact</u>	The potential grantee does not have any existing partnerships, coalitions, or collaborative efforts to increase their impact.	The potential grantee has at least one partnership or is part of a coalition or collaborative effort to increase their impact.	The potential grantee is part of one or more partnerships, coalitions or collaborative efforts to increase their impact.
	<u>Community Engagement</u>	The potential grantee does not engage the community in their systems change or reform efforts.	The potential grantee has engaged some members of the community in their systems change or reform efforts.	The potential grantee regularly engages the community in their systems change or reform efforts.
			Score	XX/36



Definitions:

- Geographic Area: The Cleveland Foundation invests in residents living in Cuyahoga, Lake, and Geauga counties as part of its geographic-based grantmaking.
- Justice-Involved Person: Any person who has had contact with the criminal legal system, including detention or arrest by a law enforcement officer, incarceration in a jail or prison (including pretrial detention), or subjection to an agency for community-based supervision, like probation, parole, post-release control, etc.
- Directly Impacted Person: Persons who have been involved with the criminal legal system and anyone in relation to those persons who have been impacted by that involvement, including spouses/partners, parents, children, grandchildren, or other relatives.
- Criminal Legal System: Police, Courts, and Correctional/Detention Facilities.