



Safety and Justice Microgrant Program Guidelines

BACKGROUND

The Allegheny County Jail population grew over 80% from 1995 to 2010, even as crime decreased. Although the population was on a downward trend since 2010, the decline has not reflected the lower crime rate. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic a significant decline in the jail population (30%) took place because of both a 77% decrease in new jail bookings and the release of older and health-compromised individuals; individuals sentenced to the jail who could be paroled early; and individuals awaiting trial or probation violation hearings who could safely be released. However, racial disparities have been persistent, with Black residents consistently comprising over 60% of the jail population despite making up just 13% of Allegheny County residents.

Nationally and locally, there is growing recognition of the issues related to overincarceration. These issues include the amount of time that people presumed innocent are held in jail awaiting trial, the prevalence of mental health and substance use issues among people involved in the criminal justice system, the disproportionate incarceration rates of Black people and other people of color, and the cost of incarceration to taxpayers. The Safety & Justice Microgrant program recognizes that solutions to these issues must include community-led strategies and is intended to uplift and provide resources for efforts to reduce jail population and racial disparities. The Microgrant program will fund efforts that are led by communities that bear the greatest burden over overincarceration.

Over the past several months, Pittsburgh Foundation staff have co-created this grant-making program with a seven-member Community Advisory Committee (CAC)¹ that was originally appointed by County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and President Judge Kim Clark, to identify the drivers of over-incarceration and develop its own recommendations to reduce the jail population and racial disparities. That initiative was a part of a grant that Allegheny County received from the MacArthur Foundation. The CAC members and The Pittsburgh Foundation share the goals of supporting effective alternatives to excessive jail incarceration and reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system and have complementary strengths. The members of the CAC have important expertise related to criminal justice reform and serve as key advisors and grant reviewers for this grant program, stewarding the process alongside the Pittsburgh

¹ The members of the Community Advisory Committee are: Taili Thompson, Operation Better Block; Monica Ruiz, Casa San Jose; Kurt Mennitti, Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc; Dante Works, House of Veterans; Valerie Dixon, Center for Victims of Violent Crimes; Rev. Cornell Jones, Department of Public Safety, City of Pittsburgh; Claire Shubik-Richards, PA Prison Society

Foundation. The Pittsburgh Foundation has significant experience with resourcing small, grassroots, and Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC)-led groups working on diverse issues from food insecurity to criminal justice reform. Housed at The Pittsburgh Foundation, the Safety and Justice Microgrant program leverages this capability to improve accessibility for groups that represent the perspectives and experiences of those most impacted by mass incarceration. This collaboration is intended to ensure that needed financial resources get into the hands of community-based organizations that can develop and implement solutions for and raise awareness about jail reduction and racial and ethnic disparities in the county.

ABOUT THE SAFETY AND JUSTICE MICROGRANT PROGRAM

Eligibility

To be eligible for this grant, you must:

- Be a nonprofit with 501(c)3 status as determined by the IRS, or an organized collective that is fiscally sponsored by an organization that has 501(c)3 status as determined by the IRS. If you plan to utilize a fiscal sponsor, please see the Foundation's [fiscal sponsorship guidelines](#) to ensure that your fiscal sponsor meets our requirements.
- Have a physical presence in, and work must primarily benefit residents of, Allegheny County.
- Address at least one of the four areas of interest identified for this program:
 - **Prevention:** Projects and organizations that address the root causes of harm, victimization, incarceration or racial disparities in the criminal justice system. This could include, but is not limited to, direct services that address the unmet social, emotional and/or financial needs of people or communities that have experienced high rates of harm and incarceration. Supported projects will provide interventions that occur **before** an individual comes into formal contact with the system.
 - **Community-based diversion models:** Projects and organizations that provide alternatives to arrest or incarceration for individuals who have come into contact with the criminal justice system. Supported projects will divert individuals from the criminal legal system by creating a “system” of early identification, assessment and intervention that seeks to address the social/emotional, financial, behavioral and mental health needs of a person within the context of their family, school and community.
 - **Reentry:** Projects and organizations that interrupt the cycle of incarceration. This could include direct services for people who have experienced incarceration, operating costs for organizations that do work to support people reentering communities after incarceration and/or work to reduce recidivism, and other related projects.
 - **Raising awareness about incarceration:** Efforts to raise awareness about the causes and effects of over-incarceration and racial disparities in the system, providing the ability to bridge conversations in the county.

Additionally, we have developed several priorities for this program. Preference will be given to proposals that:

- Demonstrate that the organization and/or program leadership has previous experience delivering programs that align with the four areas of interest, described above.
- Demonstrate that the organization and/or project is informed by and/or led by people who are currently or formerly incarcerated and/or their family members.
- Address the impact of overincarceration on Black, Indigenous and people of color (Asian, Latino/Latinx, Arab and Native American).
- Demonstrate that the organization has an established history in the communities that it serves and has ongoing relationships with community residents who inform its priorities.

What we do not fund

- Organizational start-up support.
- Statewide or national organizations, unless they have an established local office or chapter that meets the above application and eligibility criteria and priorities.
- Projects that expressly advocate for or endorse a specific candidate for elected office.
- Efforts that encourage voter registration or voter turn-out for a particular political party.
- Efforts that use propaganda to lobby or otherwise attempt to influence legislation.
- Efforts to plan and/or bring a lawsuit, prosecution or judicial proceeding.
- Annual appeals or event sponsorships.
- Capital campaigns.
- Funding for individuals.
- Research.
- Debt-reduction.
- Educational scholarships.

Request type

Applicants may request programmatic support for new or existing efforts or general operating support that helps the organization advance a mission that supports the goals of this grant program. Please consider the following definitions when determining the type of request that you will submit.

- **Program support**
 - **New programs:** Efforts that have not previously been implemented by an organization/group and proposed to reduce incarceration and/or reduce racial disparities.
 - **Existing programs:** Efforts that are already being implemented by an organization/group that can be sustained, enhanced or expanded with additional resources to reduce incarceration and/or racial disparities.
- **General operating support:** Available ONLY to organizations that have a mission and core programs that are strongly aligned with the intent of this funding program. General operating support is an unrestricted grant that can be used to cover any of a nonprofit's expenses. Fiscally sponsored projects are not eligible for operating support.

Grant categories and amounts

We expect that at least eight grants will be awarded in two categories:

- **Established organizations/projects: Grants up to \$50,000 each** will be awarded to support organizations/projects that have been working on efforts to reduce jail population

and racial/ethnic disparities for **at least five years**. Organizations will be best positioned to receive a grant in this category if they:

- Have at least one paid, full-time employee.
 - Have a mission and programming that addresses more than one of the areas of interest (prevention, reentry, diversion, awareness).
 - Can clearly demonstrate its capacity to advance the goals of this grant program.
 - Has funding from at least three additional sources (government, foundations, individual donors, etc.).
- **Emerging organizations/projects: Grants up to \$25,000 each** will be awarded to support organizations/projects that have been working on efforts to reduce jail population and racial/ethnic disparities for **less than five years**. Organizations will be best positioned to receive a grant in this category if they:
 - Can clearly demonstrate it has the staff and/or volunteer capacity to carry out the work that this grant will be used to support.
 - Have been in operation for at least 12 months and have experience delivering programs that are relevant to at least one area of interest (prevention, reentry, diversion, awareness).
 - Have limited or no support from government or foundation sources.

HOW TO APPLY

Organizations that wish to apply for this grant opportunity will have the opportunity to attend an optional information session which will be hosted on Aug. 3, 2022, at 1 p.m.

[Register for the information session.](#) *(optional)*

All organizations that would like to be considered for funding must submit a brief application through The Pittsburgh Foundation's [online grant portal](#). The application will request information about the organization and its programs, including a budget that shows how the requested funds will be used.

[Go to grant portal.](#)

You will be asked to create an account if your organization does not already have one. Once logged on, click “apply” and complete an eligibility quiz. Once you pass the eligibility quiz, you will be able to access the *Safety & Justice Microgrant* application. *For best results, we recommend you use Google Chrome 14 or higher, Firefox 9 or higher, or Safari 4.*

Application Evaluation

All applications will be evaluated by a review team comprised of Community Advisory Committee members, and Pittsburgh Foundation staff. A scoring rubric will be used to determine how well proposals describe organization and/or project alignment with the focus of this grant opportunity.

Timeline (projected)

July 19	Program announcement
Aug. 30	Application deadline
Sept. 30	Grant review panel
Early November	Decisions announced

About the Community Advisory Committee

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is a seven-member community stakeholder group appointed by County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and President Judge Kim Clark that meets monthly to learn about Allegheny County's current strategies as a part of the MacArthur funded Safety and Justice Challenge project. Its charge is to identify gaps in the criminal justice continuum that allow disparities to persist. The CAC develops its own recommendations to reduce the jail population and racial disparities.

The committee is comprised of individuals with diverse perspectives from the faith-based community, people with lived experiences within the criminal justice system, immigrant and refugee populations, as well as other populations who have been affected by the justice system or who are committed to improving the justice system.

About The Pittsburgh Foundation

Established in 1945, The Pittsburgh Foundation is one of the nation's oldest community foundations and is the 14th largest of more than 750 similar foundations across the United States. The Pittsburgh Foundation improves quality of life in the Pittsburgh region by evaluating and addressing community issues, promoting responsible philanthropy and connecting donors to the critical needs of the community. As the Foundation works in close partnership with the communities it serves to build new strategies that improve quality of life for everyone, the staff has identified these values and pledged to follow them in our work. **Accountability:** We act with transparency and integrity, fulfilling our commitments and owning the outcomes of our decisions. **Collaboration:** We unite in our work together to increase impact in our community for the collective greater good. **Community:** We embrace the opportunity to learn from those we serve and those who serve us to help shape solutions. **Racial Justice:** We work to enact fundamental systemic changes by eliminating policies, laws, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race. **Trust:** We have faith in our communities and earn their confidence by demonstrating competency, honesty and positive intent.