



Access to Justice Grants
Notice of Funding Opportunity
Community Navigators: Communities Impacted by Incarceration
Chicago South Suburbs

Summary Information

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Grant Administration: | Westside Justice Center |
| 2. Agency Contacts: | Charise Walker
Program Officer
grants@westsidejustice.org |
| 3. Type of Funding: | Expense Based Grant |
| 4. Funding Opportunity Title: | FY2021 Access to Justice Grants |
| 5. Source of Funding: | Illinois Department of Human Services |
| 6. Indirect Costs Allowed: | Yes |
| 7. Program Category: | Community Navigators -
Communities Impacted by Incarceration |
| 8. Geographic Region: | Chicago South Suburbs |
| 9. Performance Period: | January 1, 2021 - June 30, 2021 |
| 10. Posted Date: | 11/16/2020 |
| 11. Application Due Date: | 12/14/2020 |

All questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted to A2J Administrators using this [FORM](#). Questions with their respective answers will be posted on the Access to Justice Website.

The final date to submit written questions regarding this funding notice will be November 30, 2020.

Proposals and supporting documents must be submitted [using this portal](#).

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1. Program Description

1.1. Executive Summary

Access to Justice (A2J) is an Illinois statewide program that seeks to mitigate the devastating consequences of incarceration and family separation on vulnerable communities by: expanding effective and holistic community-based legal services, providing opportunities for authentic local leadership of affected individuals, sharing experience and best practices between partner organizations to increase capacity, and engaging in public discourse about the consequences of incarceration and deportation. This will be achieved through mass education provided through Community Navigators and the provision of legal services.

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) pertains to expected availability of funding for the A2J program. Funding for A2J is provided by the State of Illinois to support services delivered in FY2021. **This anticipated funding opportunity is subject to approval for the A2J program administrators to finalize a grant agreement with the Illinois Department of Human Services, and is subject to withdrawal or cancellation at any time.**

Under this NOFO, A2J program will support organizations providing services in the Chicago South Suburbs area, in the Community Navigators: Communities Impacted by Incarceration. **Performance period under this funding opportunity will start on January 1, 2021, and end on June 30, 2021.**

1.2. Background

The twin scourges of mass incarceration and mass deportation, combined with the systemic criminalization of people of color, have left communities of color in this nation reeling. Yet, these communities have amazing resilience and talent.

According to the Legal Services Corporation, while 71% of low-income households experienced at least one civil legal problem in 2017, 86% of those reported legal problems received inadequate or no legal help¹. In Illinois, this number represents over a million residents in need of legal aid.

The Access to Justice Program (A2J) expands and improves access to legal representation and system navigation for vulnerable communities, including the undocumented and returning citizens throughout Illinois. A2J grants support community based organizations by providing holistic services to promote stability and safety and remove barriers to family-sustaining employment.

1.2.1. Communities Impacted by Incarceration

In 2018, 75,000 Illinois residents were incarcerated or confined in various kinds of facilities, including State prisons, local jails, federal prison and youth facilities. In addition, 112,000 residents were on probation, and 28,000 on parole, bringing the number of Illinoisans under correctional control to

¹ Legal Services Corporation. 2017. The Justice Gap: Measuring the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-income Americans. Prepared by NORC at the University of Chicago for Legal Services Corporation. Washington, DC.

215,000.² The incarceration rate in Illinois is 564 people per 100,000 per total population, while the rate of correctional control is 1,683.³

Incarceration and court involvement disproportionately affect communities of color, as people of color are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. In Illinois, the incarceration rate for Caucasian / white Americans is 258 per 100,000, while the same rate for Hispanics are 472, and for African Americans is 2,128 per 100,000 people.⁴ African Americans make up 15% of Illinois' total population, but represent 56% of the State's jail / prison population.⁵ Furthermore, because residential housing is still segregated, incarceration is concentrated in disadvantaged communities, specifically communities of color.⁶

Effects of high incarceration rates on communities: When large numbers of parent-aged adults, especially men, cycle through stays in prison and jail at very high rates, communities are negatively affected in myriad ways, including damage to social networks, social relationships, and long-term life chances. These effects impair children, family functioning, mental and physical health, labor markets, and economic and political infrastructures.⁷

Employment and labor market: Justice involved individuals are often characterized by poor work records even prior to incarceration.⁸ Justice involvement further deteriorates employment prospects. According to the Prison Policy Initiative analysis, formerly incarcerated people are unemployed at a rate of over 27% — higher than the total U.S. unemployment rate during any historical period, including the Great Depression.⁹ This, in turn, leads to high concentrations of residents who are under-engaged in the labor market and earn diminishing income.¹⁰

As a record number of Illinoisans return to our communities from incarceration, we recognize the urgency to cultivate opportunities and access. Increased access to justice and opportunities mitigates the consequences of incarceration, strengthens infrastructure and promotes community safety and prosperity.

² Prison Policy Initiative, Illinois State Profile, available at <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/IL.html> (accessed 09.15.19)

³ Prison Policy Initiative, "Correctional Control 2018: Incarceration and Supervision by State", December 2018, Available at <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/correctionalcontrol2018.html> (accessed 09.14.19)

⁴ *See id*

⁵ *See id*

⁶ Clear, Todd R. "The Effects of High Imprisonment Rates on Communities." *Crime and Justice*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2008, pp. 97–132. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/522360.

⁷ *see id*

⁸ *see id*

⁹ Prison Policy Initiative, *Out of Prison & Out of Work: Unemployment among formerly incarcerated people* available at <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/outofwork.html> (accessed 09.17.19)

¹⁰ *see supra* note 6

1.3. Grant Program Overview

Under this NOFO, The A2J program will solicit proposals from organizations to support and expand Community Navigators programs for communities impacted by incarceration in the Chicago South Suburbs Region.

Grantees selected under this NOFO will benefit from technical assistance to help build their capacity to provide community navigation and/or legal services as applicable. Grantees selected to provide services under multiple program categories may be provided with additional technical assistance to make sure that their programs are well-coordinated for maximum positive impact on families and individuals.

All grantees will be required to participate in the evaluation of the A2J program.

2. Funding Information

2.1. Guiding Principles

A2J will support organizations with strong track records in providing effective services to address legal needs of the affected communities. The program is designed to expand existing services as well as to support new efforts from community based organizations with the goal of expanding access to legal representation and legal literacy through community navigator programs. Special consideration will be made to support community led organizations, in particular those working in historically marginalized communities and those demonstrating capacity to implement effective legal services. Funding will be distributed equitably across the state based on service needs.

2.2. General

This NOFO is considered a competitive application for funding. It is not a guarantee of funding. Selection is based on criteria established in Section 5 of the NOFO.

2.3. Disbursement of funds

2.3.1. Reimbursement Payments:

- Payments will be disbursed based on actual costs incurred as reflected in the monthly financial invoice submitted for the respective month.
- Grantees must submit a monthly financial invoice demonstrating all actual incurred costs for the preceding month. The monthly financial invoice must be delineated according to the most recently approved Program budget.
- Grantees must submit documentation to support incurred costs on a monthly basis. The supporting documentation requirements will be on a judgmental basis as determined by the program administrators after the monthly financial invoice has been received and reviewed.

2.3.2. Advance Payments:

- Grantees may request advance payments for implementation of A2J program. The process for requesting advance payments will be provided by A2J administrators.
- Approved initial payments will be disbursed in an amount of up to the first month cash flow requirements, and *as funds allow*. Submitting a request does not guarantee an advance payment.
- Subsequent monthly payments will be based on periodic financial invoices submitted to the A2J respective administrators, as described above, adjusted up or down, to reconcile payments previously advanced with respective monthly financial invoices.

2.4. Use of Funds

All applicants are subject to the funding restrictions relating to allowable and unallowable costs as set forth in 2 CFR 200, Subpart E-Cost Principles.

2.4.1. Unallowable costs

Unallowable costs include but are not limited to the following

- Bad debts;
- Contingencies or provision for unforeseen events;
- Contributions and donations;
- Entertainment, food and beverages, gratuities;
- Fines and penalties;
- Certain interest and financial costs;
- Legislative and lobbying expenses;
- Real property payments or purchases;
- Supporting a political campaign, election activities or any other political activities that are considered inconsistent with the organization's 501(c)(3) status;
- Supporting or encouraging labor or anti-labor activities, boycotts, picketing, strikes or demonstrations;
- Engaging in any activities not permissible with 501(c)(3) status;
- Supporting a sectarian purpose;
- Contracts with private attorneys to provide legal services to agency's clients
- Subawards, applicants are advised to consult [this checklist](#) to determine the nature of the relationship; or
- Filing fees to immigration agencies.

2.4.2. Allowable Costs

Allowable costs are those that are necessary, and reasonable and permissible under the law and can be found in 2 CFR 200 - Subpart E - Cost Principles. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Staff/personnel (including fringe benefits)
- Travel
- Supplies (office supplies, postage, copying paper, tablet devices, computers etc.)
- **Contractual:** including interpretations and translation services, consultants, and other contracts necessary for the successful completion of the program. The nature and purpose of the contract must be fully explained. At their discretion, A2J Administrators may request the contract or MOU language to be submitted as part of the budget approval process.
- Occupancy: Rental and utility expenses allocated for distribution as an expense to the program.
- Telecommunications allocated for distribution as an expense to the program (internet service, hot spots, data plans, phone banking).
- Training and Education costs associated with employee development. Including rental space for training (if required), training materials, speaker fees, registration fees, and any other applicable expenses related to the training.
- Miscellaneous Costs: including advertising, participant support, and other costs necessary for the successful completion
- Indirect costs. Costs that are not readily assignable to a particular project, but are necessary to the operation of the organization and the performance of the project. Applicants must indicate in their budget narratives if they elect to include indirect costs in their budgets and, if so, what indirect cost rate and base are being elected.

3. **Eligible Organizations**

- Tax-exempt nonprofit organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or those with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor;
- Organizations that satisfy the basic legal requirements for operating a 501(c)(3) organization and demonstrate strong financial management and oversight, including timely completion of an annual audit (if required); Form 990; the Illinois Attorney General Annual Report/Form 990; and other state and local licensing requirements.
- Organizations that have a track record of providing high quality services to low-income low-income Illinois residents in the program area set forth in the Funding Categories;
- Organizations that provide services to Communities Impacted by Incarceration in Chicago South Suburbs, including but not limited to:
 - Blue Island
 - Calumet City
 - Chicago Heights
 - Country Club Hills
 - Crestwood
 - Dolton
 - Evergreen Park
 - Flossmoor
 - Harvey
 - Hazel Crest
 - Hickory Hill
 - Homer Glen
 - Homewood
 - Homewood-Flossmoor
 - Markham
 - Matteson
 - Oak Forest
 - Oak Lawn
 - Olympia Fields
 - Orland Hills
 - Orland Park
 - Palos Park
 - Park Forest
 - Richton Park
 - Riverdale
 - Robbins
 - Sauk Village
 - South Holland
 - Summit
 - Thornton
 - Tinley Park
 - University Park
 - Willow Springs
 - Worth
- Organizations that are inclusive of people most impacted by racial, economic and geographic inequities, including representation in organization leadership or other forms of partnership;
- Organizations in compliance with Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) requirements, including maintaining good standing for all other requirements pertaining to pre-qualification throughout the grant period;
- In accordance with federal, state, and local laws, this program will not fund organizations that use race, color, creed, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, veteran status, or any other protected classification as a basis to deny services to qualifying individuals who seek assistance that falls within the scope of the organization's mission.

- Grants to faith-based organizations or specific programs run by faith-based or religious organizations will be considered if: the programs are open to people of all faiths; service decisions are not based on a prospective client's faith or religion; the organization's staff and volunteers do not promote a particular faith or religion to people served; and the organization's policies and practices do not discriminate against legally protected classes of individuals.
- Organizations must provide the services being funded under this program to low-income people free of charge.

4. Timeline

11/16/2020	Publication of NOFO: NOFO will be available on A2J website as well as distributed to stakeholders.
11/30/2020	Deadline to submit questions: Submit Questions Here Answers will be posted on website: www.ilaccesstojustice.com
12/14/2020	Full Proposals Due: Proposers will provide a clear plan on how it will expand or support its scope of services with ethical and high quality standards.
12/31/2020	Award Notices

5. Review and Selection Process

5.1. Advisory Committee

- A2J will convene an Advisory Committee that will read and evaluate proposals independently and make funding recommendations.
- The Advisory Committee will be interdisciplinary and composed of professionals including academic institutions, representatives from private philanthropic foundations and staff from administering agencies.
- The evaluation criteria that the Advisory Selection Committee will use are listed *infra* at 5.2 Evaluation Criteria. The Advisory Committee will evaluate each proposal and assign it a score.
- Final funding decisions will be made by A2J Administrators’ respective Boards, based on recommendations made by the Advisory Committee.

5.2. Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strength of Proposed Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposer demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population and their needs and challenges; ○ Proposer clearly defines the services to be provided, that are appropriate to addressing the needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population; ○ Proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field; ○ Use of evaluative techniques that measure success, effectiveness and efficiency as it relates to organizational mission and that are used for learning and improvement. ○ Preference will be given to projects expanding legal services where few exist. 	<p><u>25 Points</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Program performance, outcomes, and quality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposer demonstrates evidence of strong past performance; or ○ Proposer demonstrates the ability to develop capacity and expertise, demonstrated by community and stakeholders support, evidence based strategies, collaboration with other entities and the organization’s general track record in prior years; ○ Proposer has quality experience working with the target population and has relevant capabilities, partnerships, and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group. 	<p><u>15 Points</u></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizational capacity 	<p><u>25 Points</u></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposer has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, fiscal oversight, and development (or subcontracts to add this capacity); ○ Proposer has adequate systems and processes to support reporting and monitoring for government contracts, or the capacity to develop and implement such systems; ○ Proposer demonstrates active involvement and oversight by a qualified advisory board and/or board of directors; ○ The proposer engages people most impacted by racial, economic and geographic inequities, including representation in the organization leadership; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposer demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan; ○ Overall, the Proposer is fiscally sound, as evidenced by the financial history and record of the organization, as well as audited financial statements (or the equivalent); ○ Proposer proposes a reasonable cost per person or per unit given the nature of the services provided and provides justification for the level of funding requested; 	<u>15 Points</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Special considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Geographic distribution: A2J will consider priority funding for areas with high needs and areas lacking services to address service gaps; ○ Special consideration will be made to support community led organizations, in particular those working in historically marginalized communities and/or promoting leadership development ○ Special consideration will be given to proposals developing replicable and / or scalable models; ○ Collaborative models which build on strengths of a network of providers will be given special consideration. 	<u>20 Points</u>

6. Reporting Requirements

6.1. Fiscal Reports and Vouchers

Grant recipients must submit monthly programmatic and fiscal reports for the duration of the grant. A form and process will be provided by the grant administrators for organization use. Contracting organizations must maintain record keeping systems that are organized in such a way that a logical progression from service delivery to reimbursement may be ascertained.

In addition, contracting organizations' financial management systems, must be sufficient to permit the preparation of reports required by general and program-specific terms and conditions; and the tracing of funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that such funds have been used according to the Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. (See 2 CFR §200.302(a)).

Grant recipients will be required to attend a grantee orientation prior to contract signing and submitting financial and programmatic reports. Orientation will provide grant recipients with specific instructions relative to financial and programmatic reporting, allowable costs, and on site monitoring schedule.

6.2. Programmatic Reports

Reports must demonstrate performance standards and otherwise meet the work plan contractually agreed upon. A form and process will be provided by the grant administrators for organization use. Grant recipients unable to meet their work plan must submit a corrective action plan to A2J administrators within a reasonable time. This new plan must be implemented within a specified time period. Contracts are subject to cancellation if the recipient fails to implement corrective action or consistently fails to achieve minimum requirements.

Periodic reports will include but are not limited to:

- Number of Community Navigators recruited and trained
- Number of trainings and attendees
- Number of initial assessments or other support services provided
- Total number of individuals reached
- Program updates and narrative on success stories

Grant recipients are expected to participate in periodic gatherings. Additionally, A2J Grant Administrators may conduct site visits with grant recipients at a mutually agreed upon time and place.

7. Funding Categories

Under this NOFO, A2J will only award grants in Community Navigators: Communities Impacted by Incarceration funding category.

7.1. Community Navigators, Communities Impacted by Incarceration

7.1.1. Purpose

Community Navigators Program Grants will be used to fund organizations that recruit, train, and coordinate Community Navigators who then serve as community educators and connectors. Community Navigators promote an asset based approach to family stability and community safety by recognizing the role, talent, and expertise of community members directly affected by incarceration.

Community Navigators are essential to a holistic approach as they can provide the support needed to individuals in reentry, increasing access to opportunities and overcoming barriers.¹¹ Supporting individuals to identify risks and individualized supports and develop a personalized plan has been shown to increase the likelihood of success.¹²

Program Model:

- Organizations shall recruit at least 10 Community Navigators who want to support communities impacted by incarceration by providing educational workshops, outreach, and other supports.
- Partner organizations train Community Navigators on core curriculum: Know Your Rights Train the Trainer, navigating the justice system, Referral Process, and the Unauthorized Practice of Law. A2J administrators provide support, train the trainer opportunities, and curriculum for participating organizations.
- Community Navigators must be explicitly trained on the Unauthorized Practice of Law.
- Organizations may decide on appropriate goals for Community Navigators, but we recommend navigators: volunteer for 100 hours each, reach and train 100 community members on legal literacy authorized curriculum, refer 35 community members for A2J legal services, and accompany 20 community members.
- Organizations provide Community Navigators with the opportunity to receive a stipend upon completion of their goals.
- Proper documentation for Community Navigators, activities, stipends, and referrals is provided by the administering organization.
- Community Navigators receive ongoing training on policy updates, leadership for effective outreach and training (Ex: how to give a presentation or set up a training at an institution).
- Organizations and Community Navigators work together to secure presentations at public/community spaces.

¹¹ Tracy Sohoni, The Effects of Collateral Consequence Laws on State Rates of Returns to Prison (July 2015)

¹² The Council of State Governments Justice Center. (2015). Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Young Adults in the Juvenile and Adult Criminal Justice System. New York: The Council of State Governments Justice Center

Allowable A2J Funded Activities:

- Receive training by participating organization and administration organization;
- Educate the public: Provide workshops (trainings) in churches, schools, community colleges, community centers, libraries, places of work and other public/community spaces;
- Make follow-up calls to community members;
- Provide administrative assistance at A2J funded legal clinics in the areas of registration, application assistance, and making copies;
- Link community members to key service providers: community-based organizations, faith networks, legal clinics, mental health providers, and consulates;
- Provide accompaniment to clients of A2J funded legal service organizations who need additional help locating documents at government agencies; and
- Provide ongoing accompaniment to clients of A2J funded legal service organizations to keep families together through accompaniment at court cases or government agencies.

Community Navigators Program may provide ongoing accompaniment to support individuals in understanding their rights, retrieving necessary documents for court cases, accompanying in court cases, as well as preparing for filing by utilizing standardized language. Community Navigators should be explicitly trained on the unauthorized practice of law.

As a result, organizations expand the capacity and ability of individuals in need to access services at their own or numerous partner organizations. These Community Navigators will provide invaluable outreach, education, document preparation, and navigation assistance to Illinois' marginalized communities. Community Navigators will allow A2J to serve a large number of Illinois' communities impacted by incarceration.

7.1.2. Eligibility Requirements for Community Navigators Program Category

In addition to the general eligibility requirements (*supra* at Section 3), in the Community Navigators Program category, A2J will only consider applications from Illinois based non-profit organizations that prior to the start of the grant period:

- Provide system navigation services and education campaigns;
- Will train community navigators on the unauthorized practice of law;
- Have experience and successful track record of providing services to communities impacted by mass incarceration.

7.1.3. Use of Funds

In the Community Navigators Program Category, A2J would fund system navigation services related to proceedings with the ultimate goal of mitigating incarceration and its collateral consequences and/or keeping families together. Proposers may support system navigation through individual advocacy, direct service, mass education, accompaniments, leadership cultivation, or any other strategy supported by evidence, including proposer's previous work.

Although it is the administrator's intention to expand the effective leadership development outlined in 7.4.1, strong proposals that do not follow this model but serve a particular need (geographic area, harness area of expertise such as workers' rights, better meet the needs of a community, etc.) will be evaluated and considered. Administrators anticipate funding a full staff position, program costs, and stipends for Community Navigators.

Organizations cannot receive funding from another government source for the educational presentations offered through and reported to the Community Navigator A2J program.

7.1.4. Performance Measurements

Outcomes will be measured by number of community navigators recruited and trained, total individuals reached, and number of individuals benefiting from other support services, including referrals and accompaniments.

7.1.5. Proposal Requirements

To apply under the Community Navigators, Communities Impacted by Incarceration funding category:

1. Submit proposal narrative and supporting documents via [this online portal](#).
2. Complete Programmatic Risk Assessment Questionnaire, available [here](#) and on [A2J website](#).