

Letter of Inquiry Submission Process

The Michigan Justice Fund (MJF) has launched a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) opportunity to help streamline our application process and more efficiently connect with potential grantees. The MJF team will review all submissions within 30 days of receipt and will determine if there is alignment between your proposed project and the MJF goals and objectives. If there is alignment, your organization will be invited to submit a full proposal to MJF for consideration of funding. To submit an LOI, we are asking organizations to complete the following steps:

- Review background information about the MJF
- Review the LOI eligibility requirements and application questions; and
- Submit the LOI via email.

Background - The Michigan Justice Fund

The Michigan Justice Fund is a funders' collaborative that makes investments to stem the flow of individuals into the criminal justice system, support the investment of public dollars to community-driven alternatives to incarceration, and ensure that those who are returning home after incarceration receive the support they need to flourish. The MJF is comprised of Michigan-based and national funders dedicated to advancing justice reform and the economic mobility of individuals with criminal convictions in Michigan. For more information about the Michigan Justice Fund, and a current list of funders and recent grantees, please visit our [website](#).

The MJF is housed at the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, a multi-faceted, full-service philanthropic organization leading the way to positive change in southeast Michigan. The Community Foundation promotes and facilitates community philanthropy in seven counties in southeast Michigan: Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Washtenaw, Livingston and St. Clair. We help donors invest in organizations they care about – locally and nationwide.

The MJF is designed to have impact in the following ways:

- Strengthen capacity of practitioners seeking to advance effective justice policy and practice in Michigan, support the economic mobility of individuals most impacted by the justice system, and intentionally support the leadership of people of color-led organizations on the frontlines of justice reform.
- Build a sustainable network of funders and donors who are informed and engaged to support safety and justice within Michigan communities.
- Shift the dominant narrative that associates community safety with incarceration to one that lifts economic security & mobility and access to health care and education as foundational to safe and just communities.

The specific Goals and Objectives of the Fund are as follows:

Goal 1: Strengthen Michigan's funding, policies and practices to support the economic mobility and overall success of people with criminal records.

- Objective: 1.1: Ensure a racial equity framework is used to guide public policy, funding and system change decisions.
- Objective 1.2: Decrease spending on justice system agencies and increase funding for community-led priorities.
- Objective 1.3: Increase innovation in policy and practice to decrease recidivism and improve economic mobility for system impacted people.

Goal 2: Reduce the reliance on confinement and adjudication.

- Objective 2.1: Advance policy changes and system practices to reduce length of stay and administrative use of confinement.
- Objective 2.2: Increase the use of alternatives to incarceration and arrest and the public funding necessary for success.
- Objective 2.3: Increase the visibility of the presence of racial disparities across the justice system continuum to motivate change.

Goal 3: Build a movement for communities to shape justice policies and funding.

- Objective 3.1: Support narrative change and communications strategies that shift public opinion about the need for justice system reform in Michigan.
- Objective 3.2: Build the political power of communities impacted by the justice system through cross sector collaboration, training, and organizing.
- Objective 3.3: Increase the use of compelling data and research to inform advocacy efforts.
- Objective 3.4: Support ripe and emerging opportunities that contribute to a strong enabling environment for reform.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Application organizations must be a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization in good standing with the IRS and have a certified financial audit, financial review, or filed a Form 990.
- Applicant organizations must be Michigan-based. (National organizations may be considered if there is significant engagement of local partners).

Who is not eligible to apply?

- Individuals
- 501(c)(4) organizations
- While grants to religious organizations are considered, sectarian religious programs are not eligible. For example, if we are to consider funding a request from a religious organization, we would only consider a program that is open to a wider community.

Letter of Inquiry Format

Please respond to the questions below in a Word Document or PDF that is no longer than two pages and attach it to an e-mail using the instructions below.

1. The organization's official name and contact information
2. The LOI/Project Title
3. Your organization's 2021 Operating Budget
4. Requested amount
5. Please include the following responses (500 words or less):
 - a) A brief description of your organization
 - b) The proposed work and problem addressed; and
 - c) How the proposed work advances at least one of the MJF's primary goals/objectives as listed above.

Process to submit the Letter of Inquiry

Please submit all Letters of Inquiry via email to justicefund@cfsem.org. The subject of the email should be titled "Letter of Inquiry-Organization Name". You will receive a confirmation e-mail upon receipt of your submission.

Review process

We have a rolling review process. A committee of the Michigan Justice Fund will review all Letters of Inquiry and respond within 30 days of submission. Letters of Inquiry are considered based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with MJF goals and objectives/supporting advancement of MJF goals/objectives
- Initiatives that support underserved areas and populations of state will be prioritized
- All projects must proactively address the DEI challenges that impact your region/service area.

Questions?

Contact the Michigan Justice Fund Team at justicefund@cfsem.org.