



The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights Criminal Justice Advocacy and Capacity Request for Partnership

Engaging Local and Regional Leaders in Advancing Criminal Justice Reform

A Request for Partnership (RFP) issued by The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

Date of Issue: June 1, 2016

Deadline for Partnership Proposal: July 1, 2016

A. RFP Overview

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (The Leadership Conference) invites local, state and regional organizations (including non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, local leaders, and organizers) in **Florida, Illinois, and Kentucky** to apply for advocacy and capacity partnership grants to support the development and implementation of activities that advance local, state, and federal criminal justice reform.

The maximum partnership grant is \$15,000. The term of the partnership grant is nine months. The partnership is intended to support the local organization's capacity for two key objectives designed to advance the goals of the Leadership Conference's Criminal Justice Project:

- (1) To inform and engage diverse communities, stakeholders, and legislators around the need for criminal justice reform and specific state legislation; and
- (2) To utilize advocacy and campaign strategies (including communications, grassroots, and lobby strategies) to advance state and local criminal justice legislation.

Proposed grant activities should focus on one or more of the following criminal justice policy priorities of the Leadership Conference's Criminal Justice Project:

- Civil asset forfeiture reform
- Sentencing reform
- Fair chance hiring (including ban the box and records sealing & expungement)
- Bail reform
- Re-entry
- Law enforcement accountability (including racial profiling and police reform)
- Prison reform
- Police body-worn cameras
- Voting rights restoration

Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. EST on July 1, 2016. Notification of partnership grants is expected to occur in early July 2016, with the grant period beginning shortly thereafter.



B. Background on The Leadership Conference and its Criminal Justice Project

Based in Washington, DC, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights is a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States. Through advocacy and outreach to targeted constituencies, The Leadership Conference works toward the goal of a more open and just society – an America as good as its ideals.

Meaningful change must occur at both the federal and local levels. The Leadership Conference supports local advocacy on pressing civil and human rights issues by developing local/state/regional partnerships and working closely with local/state/regional organizations and leaders to accomplish mutual policy goals. The Leadership Conference has a strong track record in engaging multicultural organizations and stakeholders on the national, state and local levels to support and build diverse coalitions on civil and human rights.

The Leadership Conference believes that the treatment of communities of color in the criminal justice system is among the most profound civil rights crisis facing America in the 21st century. This crisis undermines the progress made over the past five decades in ensuring equal treatment under the law for people of color, women, low-income people, people with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups, and calls into doubt the nation’s faith and confidence in the rule of law.

Disparate treatment within the criminal justice system is not rational. The majority of crimes are not committed by communities of color – indeed, less than 10 percent of all Black Americans are even arrested in a given year. Yet the unequal targeting and treatment of people of color at every stage of the criminal justice process – from arrest to sentencing – reinforces the perception that drives the inequality in the first place, with the unfairness at every successive stage of the process compounding the effects of earlier injustices.

The unequal treatment of communities of color in our criminal justice system manifests itself in a mushrooming prison population that is overwhelmingly Black and Latino; in the decay of communities of color that have given up an entire generation of young men to prison; and in a widely held belief among African Americans and Latinos that the criminal justice system is deserving of neither trust nor support.

The Leadership Conference’s Criminal Justice Project is focused on three primary areas of reform: (1) ensuring racial justice in the criminal justice system; (2) maintaining civil rights protections and increasing transparency and accountability in federal, state and local law enforcement agencies; and (3) raising awareness of the need to remove barriers to re-entry in order for people with records to become fully contributing members of society.



C. Partnership Eligibility & Eligible Activities

Applicants must be a regional organization or based in Illinois, Florida, or Kentucky and be able to demonstrate the following:

1. Support for and alignment with The Leadership Conference's mission and goals.
2. Commitment to ensuring that local and regional efforts to advance criminal justice reform are driven by the leadership, wisdom, and voice of those directly impacted, communities of color, women, low-income people, people with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups.
3. Adequate staff capacity (or ability to hire staff) to successfully implement the activities proposed
4. Commitment to reporting requirements requested by The Leadership Conference, which include planning conversations, check-in calls, and submission of a quarterly report during the grant term.

Applicants should share examples and/or evidence of how their organizational mission and programs align with the mission and goals of The Leadership Conference. Applicants are encouraged to include information about other funding they have secured for activities that could amplify their proposed work under this partnership grant.

D. Deliverables of Capacity Partnership Grant

The Leadership Conference will work closely with each grantee to develop and implement a set of mutually-agreeable deliverables aligned with on the relevant state's political climate and organizational capacity. Project deliverables will build on activities proposed by successful applicants and may include:

- An assessment of state landscape, stakeholders, leaders, and prospect of criminal justice reform vehicles in state;
- The development and implementation of a campaign to advance state and/or local legislative vehicles for criminal justice reform, which includes some of the following activities:
 - Advocacy strategies such as public testimony, letters, online action alerts, mobilizations, etc. to educate and lobby key decision makers on criminal justice priorities);
 - Community outreach and mobilization of supporters (through, e.g., forums, lobby days, town halls, social media);
 - Communications tactics such as letters to the editors, press conferences, etc. to amplify message;
 - Development and dissemination of fact sheets and materials to inform the public and key decision-makers;
 - Recruitment of spokespersons and diverse voices in support of criminal justice reform.



E. Applying for Capacity Partnership Grant

Response to partnership request: Responses to this RFP should include each of the following components:

- Short overview of the state political landscape, vehicles for criminal justice reform, and key legislative and organizational players.
- Narrative description of proposed activities applicant would engage in to accomplish the goals of the project and achieve grant deliverables listed in section D.
- Description of technical assistance needed from The Leadership Conference to accomplish proposed activities (e.g., materials development or communications support).
- Description of membership or audience (“base”) and the key stakeholders that organization would engage in to promote public awareness of the need for criminal justice reform.
- Identification of the geographic/demographic areas where applicant has the strongest reach to mobilize communities and key decision makers in addition to key geographic/demographic areas where applicant would like to build capacity.
- Current organizational staff and capacity to accomplish the proposed activities and how funds would build capacity to successfully engage in criminal justice reform

Project budget: Applicants must include a project budget that includes the amount of the capacity grant requested, inclusive of accomplishing all activities proposed by applicant.

Following submission of the proposal, The Leadership Conference may request additional background information from applicants and may schedule a follow-up call to learn more about the organization and proposed activities.

F. Capacity Partnership Grant Selection Process

Review and evaluation of grant applications will be conducted by Leadership Conference staff. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Applications will be judged based on the following factors: (1) whether the applicant meets the eligibility criteria; (2) whether the applicant demonstrates support for The Leadership Conference’s mission and goals and commitment to advancing criminal justice reform; (3) the potential for the organization to develop and successfully execute local and regional campaigns; (4) potential for successful partnership with The Leadership Conference; and (5) geographic diversity within the state.

G. Contact

For questions or more information about this RFP, please contact Jheanelle Wilkins, Senior Field Manager, at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (wilkins@civilrights.org).



H. Deadline and Process for Proposals

Proposals must be received by **5:00 p.m. EDT on July 1, 2016**. Late and/or incomplete proposals will not be accepted. Completed proposals should be submitted via email to Jordyn Bussey at Bussey@civilrights.org. Please place your organization's name in the subject line along with the notation "Request for Partnership." Please attach all the materials specified as individual attachments to your email.