



For Immediate Release

**THE JUSTICE FUND AT THE NEW YORK WOMEN'S FOUNDATION
AWARDS \$700,000 IN NEW GRANTS TO END MASS INCARCERATION
AND SUPPORT ALTERNATIVES THAT PROMOTE JUSTICE AND SAFETY**

(New York, NY- March 22, 2019) **The Justice Fund** at [The New York Women's Foundation](#) (The Foundation) announced grants totaling \$700,000 specifically earmarked to support local criminal justice reform, with a focus on the closure of Rikers Island. Established in 2018, The Justice Fund is a collaborative grantmaking and philanthropic mobilization effort that introduces a family-centered paradigm to help dismantle mass incarceration in New York City and supports organizations working to create new paths for stability in the lives of women, families and communities. The Justice Fund is a first of its kind philanthropic partnership engaging in local criminal justice reform leading with a gender and racial equity lens.

The new grants will support five community-based organizations working to advance the closure of Rikers Island and related improvements within the local jail system through efforts that will give voice to a wide range of system-impacted community members.

Ana Oliveira, President & CEO of The New York Women's Foundation, said, "Too often, those most impacted by incarceration are the ones we never hear from. At the core of the Justice Fund's work is the belief that *they* are experts and should be included in all aspects of advocacy and systems change. With these grants, the Fund is supporting five respected and effective nonprofit organizations whose collective work will elevate the voices of justice-involved individuals, women, their families, residents of the local communities across the city, and others. Working together with our philanthropic and grantee partners, we will ensure that they are heard and heeded at all levels of government as we work to close Rikers Island and help to dismantle mass incarceration."

"The New York Women's Foundation has been a leading force for social justice in New York City for many years, and the launch of the Justice Fund is a major step forward on the path to remaking New York City's criminal justice system. The push to close the dysfunctional Rikers Island jail complex is one of the most far-reaching public policy initiatives in recent history and means the transformation of the justice system in our city," said **Hon. Jonathan Lippman, former chief judge of New York State, chair of the Independent Commission on NYC Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform, and of counsel at Latham & Watkins LLP**. "The Justice Fund's focus on women, families, and impacted communities is a timely and important recognition that those most affected by mass incarceration must have a central role in this endeavor. I applaud The Foundation, all of the Justice Fund contributors, and the five grantee organizations for their absolutely vital work."

The New York Women's Foundation's philanthropic partners in the Justice Fund are the [Art for Justice Fund](#), [Ford Foundation](#), **Frances Lear Foundation**, and [The Pinkerton Foundation](#).

Helena Huang, Project Director, Art for Justice Fund, said, "Art for Justice was founded by a visionary woman, is largely led by women and seeks to fund women and women-centered

organizations. After all, we know women who are incarcerated face unique and devastating challenges. Most – 80 percent – are mothers! How our criminal justice system treats mothers profoundly impacts our next generation. This is why I'm proud that this Women's History Month and every month of the year, the Justice Fund at The New York Women's Foundation will ensure that women's leadership is front and center in the fight to end mass incarceration."

"We're acutely aware of the growing urgency for criminal justice reform in New York City. As committed philanthropies, we're launching the Justice Fund to leverage our collaborative resources to reset a biased criminal justice system, combat pervasive inequality, and center the people and communities who have been engaged with the system and therefore are most deeply damaged by its impact. The Ford Foundation is proud to be among the founding members of this critical step to advance justice," said **Tanya Coke, Director, Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Justice, the Ford Foundation.**

"The Frances Lear Foundation is extremely proud to be a part of the Justice Fund at The New York Women's Foundation at its inception. The Fund exists to raise the voices and build the power of those communities most impacted by mass incarceration here in New York City. We welcome other funders to join this strategic collaborative committed to doing all aspects of its work with a firm gender and racial justice lens in place," said **Maggie Lear, President, the Frances Lear Foundation.**

Julie Peterson, Senior Program Officer, The Pinkerton Foundation, said, "The Justice Fund at The New York Women's Foundation is an opportunity for funders focused on a broad range of sectors -- including health, housing, workforce, education, poverty, youth, art and justice -- to unite in an effort to transform the face of justice in New York City towards dignity and respect for all people."

The new grantee partners include:

[**The Alliance of Families for Justice**](#) (AFJ) was awarded \$100,000 to support its community engagement, political education and advocacy initiative for families in Manhattan and Brooklyn who are directly impacted by the Rikers Island closure and the building of borough-based facilities. Through the Rikers Engagement Project, AFJ will facilitate and host community-based informational meetings in Manhattan and Brooklyn neighborhoods to engage and activate those most directly impacted by incarceration. AFJ members and fellows, as well as formerly incarcerated individuals and family members of current and formerly incarcerated individuals, will lead these strategic conversations and the subsequent advocacy with community members.

[**The Bronx Defenders**](#) received \$100,000 to support its community engagement, education, and policy advocacy work supporting the closure of Rikers Island. Local organizing will help integrate community input into the plans for the local Bronx jail facility. Vision mapping efforts, leadership training for residents, phone banking, mailings, emails, social media tools, and other platforms will help move residents to action. Additional efforts will include statewide reforms to support decarceration citywide and statewide that impact Bronx residents.

[**JustLeadershipUSA's**](#) (JLUSA) \$100,000 grant will support the launch a new phase of its robust #CLOSERikers campaign. As part of the initiative, targeted community engagement will educate and give voice to those directly impacted by the justice system as the city plans for borough-based jail facilities, helping to develop community solutions for decarceration and averting system engagement. In this phase of the #CLOSERikers campaign, JLUSA will also present the #buildCOMMUNITIES platform, an overview of demands developed with directly- and system-impacted individuals. Further education will be carried out through a communications campaign and the creation of a video to be used both in community meetings and through social media platforms.

[The Katal Center for Health, Equity & Justice](#) was awarded a \$200,000 grant to support implementation of Phase III of the #CLOSERikers campaign, including the creation of a citywide coalition to oversee the closing process and the engagement of community members in advocacy to ensure effective long-term systemic change. Through this coalition, Katal will partner with a range of groups spanning all aspects of criminal justice reform. Collectively they will push for legislative changes at the city and state level as well as develop community engagement strategies to get direct input in each borough on the plans for new jail facilities in time for the ULURP process vote in October 2019. Katal will also continue their technical assistance support to local partners, providing access to stakeholders through legislative meetings and expand capacity for a Rikers narrative shift communications plan.

A \$200,000 grant to [The Women's Community Justice Association](#) (WCJA), a consortium of five organizations -- Housing Plus, Greenhope Services for Women, Hour Children, Providence House and Women's Prison Association -- will support the launch of *Beyond Rosie's*, a campaign that seeks to close the Rose M. Singer women's facility at Rikers Island by 2020 and advocate for the expansion of Alternatives to Incarceration and Detention (ATI & ATD) programs for women and their families. The grant will support a multi-year public education campaign on the benefits of decarcerating women, as well as the creation of a sustainability plan highlighting the critical needs of women and families.

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[About The New York Women's Foundation](#)

Since 1987, The New York Women's Foundation has advanced a dynamic philanthropic strategy based on the fundamental reality that, when women thrive, their families and communities also thrive. The Foundation's grantmaking places it at the top of public women's foundations in the United States, and in the top two in the world. We invest in women-led, community-based solutions that promote the economic security, safety, and health of the most vulnerable women in New York City. We foster women's leadership, create partnerships that spark catalytic change, exchange insights with experts across sectors, and empower women by training them in activism and philanthropy to accelerate and sustain forward progress. Visit <http://www.nywf.org> to learn more about our work to transform lives, families, and communities – and create a better New York City for all.

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