



Supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation



## Request for Proposals for the Innovation Fund Competition

May 2018

<b>Purpose of solicitation</b>	The Innovation Fund is an opportunity for justice agencies and local communities to implement bold and innovative ideas in order to reduce over-incarceration in jails and build capacity for future system change.
<b>Eligibility</b>	This competition is open to any jurisdiction with governing authority over a local jail or jail system that has at least 50 beds. Jurisdictions that have received past Safety and Justice Challenge funding are not eligible.
<b>Award</b>	Selected applicants will receive technical assistance, peer learning, and a grant of up to \$50,000 to support a 15-month implementation process.
<b>RFP Issue date</b>	May 1, 2018
<b>Deadline for applications</b>	June 15, 2018
<b>Notice of decision to applicants and public announcement</b>	September 2018
<b>Implementation period</b>	October 2018 – December 2019

## Overview

Since the 1980s, jail populations have more than tripled as America relies on local incarceration. In the United States, we have over 3,000 jails that hold 731,000 people on any given day, with nearly 12 million jail admissions annually. Jails form a critical part of our nation's incarceration problem with troubling individual, financial, and social consequences. Although most people booked into jail are released within a few days, being detained can place individuals on a slippery slope with serious consequences: job and housing loss, more punitive sentences, reduced social mobility, future criminal behavior, worsened health, and weakened familial and social bonds. These consequences become more severe for those entering jail already disadvantaged, whether because of mental illness, substance abuse, poverty, or other factors such as race and gender.

Fortunately, there is tremendous local-level innovation occurring across the country aimed at reducing incarceration and making the criminal justice system more fair and effective at protecting communities. To further support such innovative efforts nationwide, the [John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation](#) (MacArthur) partnered with the [Urban Institute \(Urban\)](#) to launch the Innovation Fund in 2016. The purpose of the Innovation Fund is to foster and support innovative ideas from local jurisdictions that are consistent with the goals of MacArthur's [Safety and Justice Challenge](#) to reduce over-incarceration in America while maintaining or enhancing public safety, with a particular focus on addressing disproportionate justice impact on low-income individuals and communities of color.

To build on the momentum generated by the Innovation Fund work to date, MacArthur and Urban are announcing a second Innovation Fund competition.

## The Innovation Fund

We recognize that innovation and risk-taking can be difficult, especially in the criminal justice space. To this end, the Innovation Fund provides awardees with financial assistance, technical assistance, and a network of support to test bold and innovative ideas from start to finish. The first Innovation Fund competition yielded a cohort of 20 participant jurisdictions, diverse in their sizes, geography and areas of focus. Details on the work of the first round Innovation Fund sites are available at <http://www.safetyandjusticechallenge.org/innovation-fund/>.

The goals of the Innovation Fund include:

- Creating a space for jurisdictions to test new ideas and take risks;
- Developing a better understanding of the key issues related to reducing the overuse of jail and measures that can be taken to address these issues;
- Enhancing capacity for coordination among stakeholders and future system change efforts in Fund participant sites; and
- Disseminating innovative practices and lessons learned during implementation to shape future initiatives.

### Types of support

The sites selected to participate in the Innovation Fund will benefit from the following:

- **Grant awards of \$50,000.** These awards are intended to fund the planning and implementation of the site's innovation for a 15-month period.
- **Access to expert technical assistance (TA) and feedback from Urban.** An Urban TA team will provide support over a 15-month period (October 2018–December 2019), which could include such activities as help troubleshooting challenges in planning and implementation, developing performance measures, and thought partnership to identify evidence-based practices to inform innovation design.

- **Virtual peer learning opportunities.** Innovation Fund participants will have access to a wide variety of webinars, trainings, and peer consultation events hosted by Urban and the broader SJC partners through SJC Exchange, the networks' online platform for peer learning.
- **Elevation of your jurisdiction's work through attendance at the Safety and Justice Challenge Network convenings.** The SJC Network meets twice yearly to bring the network together based on shared issues and focus areas, roles in the system, and jurisdiction size; strengthen site capacity through plenaries, workshops, and access to TA providers; and inspire and motivate the teams to advance their reform work.
- **Forming part of a network of jurisdictions at the forefront of a national movement to rethink the use of jail.** Throughout the innovation period, participating jurisdictions will have the opportunity to interact and learn from experts and peer-sites as part of the robust Challenge network.

## Project Timeline

**Applications for participation are due on June 15, 2018.** Successful applicants will be notified by September 2018. Implementation and technical assistance will span a 15-month period from October 2018–December 2020. The first SJC convening after selection will occur October 17-19, 2018; two representatives from each new Innovation Fund site will be expected to attend.

## Eligibility

Any jurisdiction with governing authority over a local jail or jail system that has at least 50 beds is eligible to apply for grant funding through the Innovation Fund Competition. Jurisdictions that wish to contract with local partners to carry out some or all of the proposed innovation activities may apply with that partner and have the funds awarded directly to that partner if selected. Jurisdictions may submit more than one application under this solicitation. However, we will not fund more than one innovation in the same jurisdiction.

Communities that that received funding as a 2017-18 Innovation Fund site **are not eligible** to apply for this second round of funding.

Urban is interested in serving a diverse group of sites through the Innovation Fund. However, MacArthur and Urban believe that certain applicant characteristics will ensure sites get the most value possible out of Innovation Fund participation.

**Potential impact.** Sites should be able to articulate the impact their project would have on the challenges facing the jail population(s) in their jurisdiction. Projects that can clearly identify the characteristics of their population to be positively impacted by this project will be scored more highly than those who cannot.

**Prove readiness to implement innovation.** Sites are expected to clearly define the goals for their proposed innovation, including the scope and any associated planning and stakeholder engagement that has or will need to occur. Applications should indicate how the Innovation Fund funding will be spent in alignment with the site's goals.

## What Do We Mean by Innovation?

In the framework of the Innovation Fund, we understand innovation to include new solutions, strategies, processes, models, and/or products related to the jail population that lead to new or improved capabilities, relationships, and a better use of assets and resources. Ideas can be innovative locally, nationally, thematically, and/or in their approach to tackling challenges around

the jail population, and must be rooted in research or evidence. Innovative ideas should be aimed at reducing jail populations while increasing public safety and creating a more fair, just, and equitable justice system.

The innovation must address challenges identified at one or more of these [decision points](#) in the criminal justice process:

- arrest;
- charging;
- appointment of counsel;
- pretrial release/bail;
- case processing;
- disposition and sentencing;
- and reentry/community supervision.

## Potential Innovation Fund Activities

Examples of activities the Innovation Fund might support include, but are not limited to:

- Expanding or enhancing pretrial release, diversion, or management programs/systems;
- Implementation measures, processes, or mechanisms to reduce racial and ethnic disparities;
- Making improvements to technology, such as automated court reminders; kiosk and cell phones to replace office visits; and electronic monitoring systems as alternatives to incarceration;
- Improving behavioral health resources and alternatives to jail for those dealing with mental illness and substance abuse issues;
- Putting in place new developments and/or collaborations in data systems to collect, manage, analyze, and share data;
- Establishing, expanding, or enhancing cooperative partnerships and infrastructure to support coordination between agencies involved with jail populations;
- Improving police practice for conducting arrests and reducing jail bookings;

- Implementing speedy hearing processes, or alternative mechanisms to curtail use of incarceration for technical violations; or
- Activities that strengthen community engagement and systems reform.

You may wish to review the work undertaken by the first cohort of Innovation Fund sites, described [here](#).

## Expectations of Awardees

The intention of the Innovation Fund is to create an opportunity for local jurisdictions to build capacity by providing a package of tailored support including technical assistance, peer learning, and financial support for future system change efforts leading to reduced reliance on local jails.

To that end, Innovation Fund awardees will be expected to:

- Commit to participate in the Innovation Fund over the **15-month implementation period** (October 2018–December 2019).
- **Engage with the Innovation Fund and broader SJC network** on an ongoing basis, including:
  - Sending a two-person team to participate in two SJC convenings annually. Attendees will participate in workshops and peer learning sessions, in addition to having opportunities to work with the Urban TA team. The Innovation Fund will cover travel expenses for the team directly (not through the grant to the jurisdiction);
  - Reporting progress on grant-funded activities to Urban on a quarterly basis, including quarterly financial reports;
  - Sharing information with the other Innovation Fund and Challenge sites, and the field, on innovation efforts and lessons learned from them as they develop; and
  - Participating in regular conference calls with the Urban TA team.

- Commit to **ongoing monitoring and evaluation** of their innovation efforts, and to adapt and modify their efforts as indicated by evaluation and performance measurement results.
- Participate in **virtual learning opportunities** convened by Urban and the SJC network. This may include presenting, facilitating, and/ or attending.

## How to Apply

Please submit your application via the Innovation Fund's online platform at <https://innovation-fund.fluidreview.com/> by **11:59 p.m. EST on June 15, 2018**. Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted. You may save your work and return to edit your application within the application window before submitting it for review; reviewers will only look at final submitted applications. Note that any revisions after submission cannot be accommodated. Applications must be submitted through the Innovation Fund online platform; emailed or mailed applications will **not** be considered.

Should you experience any technical difficulties with the online application process, please e-mail [support@fluidreview.com](mailto:support@fluidreview.com) for technical assistance. Direct assistance on web portal technical issues from Fluid Review's support desk will be available Monday-Friday, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. EST.

## Application and Site Selection

Applications are invited from any jurisdiction that has at least 50 beds with governing authority over a local jail or jail system. Sites that have participated in the Safety and Justice Challenge Network or the first round of the Innovation Fund Competition will not be eligible to apply.

Since resources are available to work with a select number of innovations, every effort will be made to identify those applicants where the conditions for maximum impact are present, as well as a group of innovations that together represent jurisdictions large and small, urban and rural, and from various regions of the country.



We will also make efforts to select innovations that represent the continuum of decision points in the criminal justice system.

Please ensure you highlight any particular populations (e.g. women, individuals that identify as LGBTQ+, Native Americans) that may be a specific focus of your innovation.

## Prerequisites

The elements of the application addressing the prerequisite criteria will not be scored, but are required from every applicant. Applications that do not adequately address the two prerequisite criteria will not be considered.

- **Cover Letter** – Each application must begin with a joint letter signed by the head of the lead applicant agency/organization and other key partnering organizations. The letter should outline the significance of the proposed innovation and what issues it will address with the support of the Innovation Fund, state the request of the partnering organizations, and affirm the willingness of the signatories to participate in the innovation.
- **Abstract** – Each application must include a 250-word abstract.

## Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used to select innovations from among the applicants that meet the prerequisites. Please ensure that your application addresses each item.

### (1) Innovation Design and Implementation (60%)

1.1 Please provide a detailed description of the innovation your jurisdiction wishes to pursue.

Your answer should address the following (*up to 750 words total*):

- What is your innovation?
- Why is this idea innovative for your jurisdiction/community?

- If applicable, what specific population will your innovation benefit?

1.2 Describe how your proposed innovation will affect the use of jail in your jurisdiction. Please include details on what you hope to achieve in terms of measurable results and/or practice changes. *(up to 500 words total)*.

1.3 Describe your implementation plan, including the timeline that you will use to achieve the goals and objectives identified *(up to 500 words total)*.

## (2) Leadership and Capacity (30%)

2.1 Who will be the lead agency for this initiative and why is this agency best suited to spearhead this effort around the use of jail in your jurisdiction? Your answer to this question should address the following *(up to 400 words total)*:

- What is the lead agency's organizational capacity and experience to manage projects with successful implementation and necessary collaboration?
- What will be the most formidable challenges for the proposed effort and how will the lead agency manage them?

2.2 What other key stakeholders, if any, will be integral to the success of this effort and why? *(up to 400 words)*

2.3 What makes now an opportune time to engage in this work? Your answer to this question should address the following *(up to 400 words)*:

- Has this idea been explored before, and if so, why haven't you been able to implement your innovation in the past?
- What other initiatives, if any, are you involved in that are relevant to the success or timeliness of your proposed innovation?

2.4 Describe the type of technical assistance and analytic supports you anticipate will be needed to successfully implement this innovation *(up to 250 words)*.

### (3) Budget (10%)

3.1 In two to three sentences, please summarize how you will use the \$50,000 (*up to 150 words*).

Sites selected to participate in the Innovation Fund will receive \$50,000 to support a 15 -month implementation process (October 2018 – December 2019). **All applicants are required to submit a budget and a budget narrative.** Applicants should use the [sample budget template](#) when possible, but are permitted to use their own format provided it includes the required information. Please ensure you're explaining all costs associated with this project (both direct and indirect) and all costs should be itemized.

Applicants should provide an accompanying narrative to correspond to the line-item budget cost components. This narrative should include justification for the costs and assumptions, methodologies, and/or formulas relevant to the cost components. Please consider the following in your narrative when relevant costs are included:

- **Labor/Salaries:** Include the name (if unfilled position, include title only), title, and either annual salary with % of time (or FTE) *or* the number of estimated hours with the hourly rate. Fringe benefits should be itemized separately from the salary/hourly rate and no other loadings should be included in these base rates. Note: Only include personnel currently (or expected to be) employed by your agency; staff from partnering organizations, consultants, and other contractors should be detailed in the Contractor/Consultants line-item.
- **Fringe Benefits:** Must be included for personnel costs; Include numerical rate and description of components (e.g., Health Insurance, FICA, pension, etc.); OR attach most recent Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) if fringe rate is incorporated therein.
- **Contractors/Consultants:** Include the name of the entity, the services that will provided by each and the breakdown of how the estimate was derived (hourly rates, etc.) as well as a description of the relevancy to your project. Any person or organization that is not employed directly by your County should be included in this category.
- **Data Enhancements:** This line-item would include things such as software purchases geared at enhancing the county's capacity to understand and collect criminal justice related data. Please be sure to include vendor name and rates as relevant and in as

much detail as possible, such as what will be purchased, individual price, how the cost was estimated, and relevancy to your project. Attach supporting materials when possible.

- **Equipment/Hardware:** Includes items such as computers that are necessary for the success of the proposed innovation. Please include vendor name and rates as relevant and in as much detail as possible. At a minimum, this should include a description of the item, individual price, how the cost was estimated, and relevancy to your project. Attach supporting materials when possible.
- **Supplies:** Includes items such as printing costs, postage and delivery, notebooks, and other general office items that are necessary to implement the proposed innovation. Please include as much detail as possible in determining how these costs are calculated.
- **Travel:** Include description of project travel, including breakdown of all costs. Note that this should NOT include travel to Safety and Justice Challenge Network Meetings, as this will be covered separately by Urban and project partners.
- **Events/Meetings/Trainings:** Include any costs related to events, meetings, or trainings under the proposed innovation, such as food, meeting space and other supplies relevant to the event. Please be sure to include detail to how the estimated costs are calculated. For instance, if you plan to spend \$500 on an event – please break down the components of this amount (how much is spent on food (\$x/person for x people), event space, and materials).
- **Other Direct Costs:** For all other costs, detail the item and how the cost was estimated.
- **Indirect Costs:** If your agency incorporates any costs into an overhead pool (which might be categorized as overhead, general and administration, indirect costs, etc.) you may likewise incorporate these costs in the same way into your budget. If your organization has a current NICRA approved by a government agency, you may attach this as documentation for the rate included in your budget. If you do not have a NICRA, but include these costs in your budget and your budget narrative should include a description of the components of your cost pool (rent, Executive Director, Accounting staff, etc.) and how the rate was derived.

## Notification of Decision

Applicants will be notified of a decision on their application via e-mail from the Foundation and Urban. Applicants who are selected will have **one week** to confirm their interest in moving forward.

## To Learn More

The Urban Institute and MacArthur Foundation will host two live webinars to confirm details about the competition and application process as well as to answer questions. The content of these webinars will be identical (aside from the question and answer), and they will be recorded and accessible via the Innovation Fund project page at <https://innovation-fund.fluidreview.com/>.

The webinars are scheduled as follows:

**Tuesday, May 15, 2018 from 12:00pm-1:00pm Eastern Standard Time**

**Thursday, June 7, 2018 from 11:00am-12:00pm Eastern Standard Time**

*Registration is required to participate in these sessions.*

Please register for the **Tuesday, May 15, 2018** webinar at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6506751873640243970>.

Please register for the **Thursday, June 7, 2018** webinar at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1291115113191826434>.

Webinars will be recorded and posted on our online platform at <https://innovation-fund.fluidreview.com/>. We will also post answers to questions received regarding the Innovation Fund opportunity and RFP there.

**Applicants are not required to attend a webinar.**

Should you have any questions about the application process, please send an e-mail to Evelyn McCoy at [emccoy@urban.org](mailto:emccoy@urban.org). We will make an effort to answer your individual questions and

structure our webinar according to frequently asked questions and concerns. Responses to all questions received will be posted regularly at <https://innovation-fund.fluidreview.com/>.