



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR Evaluation Services

## **Background**

Communities for Just Schools Fund, a national donor collaborative (fiscally sponsored by New Venture Fund), brings together the resources of philanthropy with the power of grassroots organizing to ensure that all schools welcome students and nurture their full potential. The **theory of change** undergirding CJSF's priorities is that changing the system of education to create equitable, healthy, safe, and nurturing schools and learning environments requires youth, parent, and teacher-led perspectives and voice.

CJSF's strategic priorities (outlined in [our strategic plan](#)) are to **Fund, Build, Connect, and Lead**. Our approach:

1. **FUND:** We are a funder first, providing 60 grassroots organizing groups advancing racial justice in education in all parts of the country and the world - [our partners](#) - with two-year general operating support grants of at least \$50k per year.

In the last five years, CJSF has moved more than \$16 million in grants to grassroots organizing groups around the U.S. and the world.

2. **BUILD:** We build the capacity of our grantee partners by growing their strategic know-how on everything from communications to data analysis as well as creating space for collective strategy, learning, and action on emergent issues and approaches.

We have hosted learning exchanges on topics ranging from *Using the Civil Rights Data Collection to Advancing Police-Free Schools*.

In 2018, CJSF and our partners authored and released [Do the Harder Work: Create Cultures of Connectedness in Schools](#) and in 2020, we released [Reclaim Social-Emotional](#)

[Learning: Centering Organizing Praxis for Holistically Safe Schools.](#)

3. **CONNECT:** We foster relationships between our grantee partners and philanthropy, policy, research, advocacy, national movement leaders, and others.

[Our most recent federal action](#), drafted in collaboration with our partners, was in response to a call for comments about a U.S. Department of Education proposed grantmaking priority elevating culturally responsive curricula and related training.

4. **LEAD:** We lead efforts, together with our partners, to make school discipline reform and positive school climate and safety a priority for philanthropy, policymakers, and national allies.

In December 2020, we collaboratively authored (with our partners) a [recommendations memo](#) for the Biden Administration's transition team.

Our goal is to advance and work to implement policies and practices that create positive, safe, and nurturing school climates, which protect and affirm the inherent cultural dignity of all students and foster the success of all students. Toward that end, the CJSF community seeks to end harsh and punitive school discipline practices and policies, including responses from law enforcement, that unfairly and disproportionately impact students of color including students impacted by bias based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, poverty, and disability.

## **Project Description and Desired Outcomes**

Communities for Just Schools Fund is seeking an evaluator with expertise in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis and experience working with community organizers and philanthropy who can help us to assess our progress in advancing our theory of change and strategic priorities (fund, build, connect, lead) as well as understand how the education justice field has shifted and changed in the last several years and how CJSF should be deepening, shifting, and/or maintaining our efforts, approaches, and organizational infrastructure.

In order to plan for an impactful next three to five years, we seek to understand:

- our impact and where there is alignment and difference in perspectives on our impact across the different sectors and spaces we move in - philanthropy, organizing, and advocacy;
- how CJSF's efforts are influencing philanthropy's understanding of, support for, and engagement with the education justice field;
- what shifts have happened in philanthropic strategy and resourcing of education and racial justice efforts, and why;
- what avenues of resourcing partners are pursuing inside and outside institutional philanthropy;
- what shifts have happened in strategy, tactics, and demands of organizers advancing demands for racial justice in education, and why;

- how narratives within and about the education justice movement have shifted or changed in media, research, and public discourse;
- what impact CJSF's giving and capacity-building efforts have had on our community partners' efforts;
- the impact and influence CJSF has had on organizing, advocacy, and systems change efforts towards advancing racial justice in education overall.

CJSF has identified the following desired evaluation outcomes:

- Understanding the impact of CJSF's fund, build, connect and lead efforts over the last three to four years;
- Identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas of increased need within our partner ecosystem and the overall movement for racial justice in education;
- Identifying winning strategies for attracting and growing foundation commitments to and other investments in CJSF's and our partners' work.
- Understanding the role(s) CJSF stakeholders envision for our organization in the years ahead.

## **Project Requirements**

The Evaluator should:

- Propose and assist with finalizing an evaluation design
- Observe program activities (such as partner calls and events as well as quarterly donor member meetings) and conduct structured and unstructured interviews with staff, members, grantee partners, and other stakeholders;
- Conduct surveys and/or focus groups;
- Manage all data collection processes;
- Provide regular status updates;
- Provide quarterly formative evaluation reports with summative findings and recommendations.
- For a donor member - assist with developing biannual (twice yearly) reports that synthesize and document local base-building innovations, policies, local leader profiles, and narratives that have advanced local base-building goals and agendas.
- Present interim and final findings for stakeholders - including staff, donor members, and grantee partners.

## **Target Populations For Evaluation Research**

- **CJSF Staff** - six staff members.
- **CJSF donor members and others in philanthropy** - 21 donor members
- **CJSF community partners (grantees)** and other education justice movement actors not currently in our partner network - 60 community partners
- **CJSF network partners** (policy and legal advocacy organizations, philanthropy, professional associations, etc) - CJSF has an extensive community of network partners

## **Current Data and Data Collection Activities**

- Fund:
  - CJSF Partner “successes” summary document (highlighting policy & practice change as well as advances in base building, power-building, and leadership development)
  - Annual grant reporting documentation from grantee partners (including narrative reports & proposals, organizational budgets, and financial reports)
  - CJSF grant write ups & funding recommendations
  - Organizational metrics (i.e., membership composition, leadership demographics, location, budget size)
  - Grantmaking metrics broken down by state and region
- Build:
  - CJSF partner meeting resources & notes (includes recordings)
  - Reports and letters written in collaboration with partners, e.g., [Do the Harder Work](#), [Reclaim Social-Emotional Learning](#), and [Biden-Harris transition memo](#)
- Connect:
  - Social media and Constant Contact metrics from the past year (2020-2021)
  - Google analytics data for organizational website
  - Survey data with feedback from webinars and learning exchanges
- Lead:
  - Quarterly donor member meeting resources and notes
  - Donor member grant terms gantt
  - CJSF newsletters
  - CJSF partner profiles

## **Proposal Content**

Proposals shall include the information outlined in this section:

- Name of principal contact, voice telephone and e-mail address;
- A brief description of the firm including capacity, qualifications and relevant experience delivering the specified services outlined above in the “Project Requirements” section;
- Short biographies and resumes of each identified team member for this project;
- A brief description of relevant content knowledge and experience conducting evaluations involving CJSF’s target populations;
- Project description, approach and timeline (including any value added services offered) to providing the specified services outlined above in the “Project Requirements” section;
- Three (3) references for similarly contracted services within the last (10) ten years including name, address, phone number, email address, scope of services provided and length of service;
- Two (2) sample work products of similarly conducted evaluation reports; and
- Sample and/or recommended project budget and timelines, as successfully applied to other projects.

Proposals not including the requested content above will not be considered. CJSF will consider the following when reviewing proposals that meet the criteria above:

- Qualifications and experience of the entity, including capability and experience of key personnel, entity's experience meeting timelines and other requirements, as well as knowledge and experience working with CJSF key stakeholders;
- Adequate staff and resources to perform the specified tasks required to meet the services as outlined;
- Demonstrated expertise in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis and program evaluation of similar projects;
- Proposed approach, including demonstrated understanding of work to be performed and a realistic timeline;
- Project budget that does not exceed 150K (inclusive of all costs) and is clearly organized in its provision of a work plan of deliverables in association with milestones. We invite you to use this [project budget template](#) to share your proposed budget.
- Other value added services offered.

Proposals are to be delivered by email to [info@CJSFund.org](mailto:info@CJSFund.org). A proposal must be received by 11:59pm PT on **Wednesday, July 14, 2021** to be considered a responsive proposal. Communities for Just Schools Fund reserves the right to extend this deadline.

- RFP Questions Due by Wednesday, June 30, 2021 (submitted to [info@cjsfund.org](mailto:info@cjsfund.org))
- Proposals Due by 11:59pm PT on Wednesday, July 14, 2021
- Contractual work to begin the second week of August.

## **Term of Contract**

The term of contract is one year and will continue as framed during the interview period and agreed to via contract before services begin. RFP Responders will be asked to provide a w9, w8 or other evidence of business and tax status.

## **Evaluation Logistics and Desired Launch Timeline**

CJSF will provide the Evaluator with designated points of contact who will be available for regular meetings as needed.

CJSF will also provide the Evaluator with data collection tools and other existing resources.

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### **Right to No Award**

Communities for Just Schools Fund reserves the right to reject all proposals, reject portions of any proposal, or accept the proposal deemed most advantageous to Communities for Just Schools Fund.

### **Preparation Costs**

All costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of the RFP shall be wholly absorbed by the applicant. All documents submitted will become the property of Communities for Just Schools Fund.

**Questions**

Any questions regarding this RFP shall be submitted electronically to [info@cjsfund.org](mailto:info@cjsfund.org) by Wednesday, June 30. Responses will be provided in writing within two (2) business days and [made available here](#). No phone calls or social post inquiries please.