

# ARE YOU OUR NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR?



## THE INVITATION

Communities for Just Schools Fund (CJSF) is looking for an Executive Director who will lead CJSF into our next phase as an independent abolitionist-oriented organization. Founded in 2010 by individuals in philanthropy who understood that in the education justice ecosystem, grassroots organizers are the least resourced and most impactful, CJSF is a national collaborative that links philanthropy with the power of grassroots organizing to transform schools.

We are seeking a leader for this season in our organizational growth and evolution - to help us shift to and formalize an independent organizational infrastructure while broadening, deepening, and sustaining support for our partners and a vibrant healthy movement. Do you have experience growing organizations and coalescing stakeholders for action? Are you an adaptable person who understands adjustments will happen? Our new leader will enthusiastically & incisively center CJSF's partners - grassroots community organizers - when convening members, funders, partners, & friends alike.

**Are you a visionary, creative leader with a deep commitment to justice and an understanding of the intersections of forms of justice (e.g. racial, gender, climate) & why those are important to advancing education justice?**

# ABOUT OUR WORK

CJSF is determined to make sure that public education takes the road that has been dreamt and engineered by communities, led by organizers. We work to ensure that conversations about this moment and the future of education center holistic safety and belonging, and are grounded in organizers' demands and expertise. Four strategic priorities provide structure for our current programming:

## Fund

We fund organizations that change schools and the system of education through community organizing. We fund first. We provide multi-year general operating support grants to grassroots organizing groups in more than 22 states, Puerto Rico, Canada, and Washington, D.C. The majority of grants range in size from \$100,000-\$400,000. We also mobilize rapid response support. Our grantmaking has steadily increased. In both 2021 & 2022 we moved more than \$5 million in grants and contributions to grassroots groups.

## Build

We build the capacity of our partners by supporting their strategic know-how on everything from communications to data analysis and centering and resourcing their healing and wellness.

## Connect

We are dot-connectors. We foster relationships between our partners and philanthropy, policy, research, advocacy, national movement leaders, & others.

## Lead

We lead efforts, together with our partners, to learn, to strategize, and to make community-rooted holistic school safety and positive school climate a priority for philanthropic organizations, policymakers, and national allies.

**[See our 2021 annual report.](#)**

# HOW WE ARE WHO WE ARE

CJSF has a current annual budget of approximately \$8 million. We are currently fiscally sponsored but have a goal of establishing the organization as an independent organization in the near term and are seeking a leader who can help us make this move. We are currently a squad of eight people with experience that includes grassroots organizing, movement building, policy advocacy, facilitation, transformative justice, operations, philanthropy, and narrative power-building. We have budgeted not only for hiring an Executive Director but also a Deputy Director of Organizational Health and Abundance. When these hires are complete, we will be a team of 10 collaborating with a network that includes 80 partners, 23 donor members, and a number of other networks and organizations with whom we conspire and sometimes grapple to move closer to the world our partners are manifesting in their daily work.

Our Executive Director works closely with a subset of our donor members known as the Executive Committee. This Committee, through which members rotate in two-year (renewable) terms, serves as the de facto board for CJSF, approving human resources decisions and large expenditures and most importantly serving as thought partners and a sounding board for the Executive Director.

CJSF is an organization that aims to be leaderful, to center our partners, and to ensure authentic spaces for member learning, connection, and action. We are constantly evolving.



# KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Serve as a key organizer for CJSF members and philanthropy to move the sector towards more deeply understanding and resourcing grassroots, community-led efforts to build, wield, and sustain community power.
- Lead strategic priority-setting, in partnership with staff and members.
- Collaborate with senior staff to build and maintain a cohesive, supportive, and collaborative organization with a culture that attracts, inspires, invests in, and retains a diverse, professional, & experienced staff.
- Supervise staff including Deputy Director of Programs, Director of Storytelling & Deputy Director of Organizational Health and Abundance.
- Develop and lead the implementation of a comprehensive fundraising strategy to ensure CJSF's financial health and organizational capacity.
- Lead financial oversight and planning in collaboration with Deputy Director of Organizational Health and Abundance, including crafting an annual budget for member approval and providing updates to members.
- Provide strong leadership to the CJSF Executive Committee and others to ensure CJSF members are effectively engaged in advancing CJSF's vision and positioned to be of service to CJSF's partners and the movement for racial justice in education. Plan for creation of a strong board structure as a strategic component of becoming an independent organization.

# KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Collaborate with the Director of Storytelling, members, partners, and others to ensure that our communications strategy is accountable to the field's need for narrative strategy resources as well as their call for narrative power-building strategy space and support.
- Strategize with the Deputy Director of Programs to convene members for rich learning and strategy opportunities that ground collaborative efforts in a nuanced understanding of organizing and our partners' demands while being responsive to our members' interests and needs.
- Serve as a principal voice for CJSF, including representing CJSF at meetings, events, & conferences across the country, and offering a critical perspective on topics related to education justice, philanthropy, and more, through writing, public scholarship, and engagement with press/media.
- Develop and expand relationships and networks with CJSF's members, other philanthropy colleagues, and movement leaders.
- Listen deeply to CJSF's partners and other movement actors and lead in ways that model a genuine commitment to authentic solidarity and action.

# CANDIDATE PROFILE

CJSF's Executive Director will have significant experience successfully leading, ideally in an organization of similar or relatable complexity. For CJSF, our complexity to date has manifested as being both nimble & creative to proactively move unencumbered resources and respond to partners' learning needs. We prioritize moving significant resources to our partners. Our new leader will have experience building an organization with insights into how to center staff wellness and will have knowledge of and experience with both grassroots organizing and philanthropy. They will be a visionary who can call others towards abolitionist pathways and the journey from here to there.

- **Political alignment:** deep commitment to justice and a nuanced understanding of the intersections of multiple forms of justice (e.g. racial, gender, climate) and why those are important to the work of advancing education justice.
- **Movement expertise:** experience with organizing including a nuanced understanding of power-building and political education and comfort effectively convening and supporting a network grappling with strategies and challenges as provocative as dual power and as mundane as policy change. First-hand experience as an organizer is preferred.
- **Philanthropy expertise:** experience with philanthropy and the strategies, challenges and opportunities that foundation staff and boards encounter and how to strategically navigate the sector forward.
- **Relationship builder:** centers relationships in their approach to work. Demonstrable experience building and sustaining relationships across roles, place, and perspectives.

- **Equity Advocate:** centers the voices of those most directly and acutely impacted and understands our place in philanthropy with different degrees of privilege. Models a deep understanding of how justice and equity advocacy play out in our work and relationships as well as an orientation to intersectionality and a commitment to leadership practices grounded in the philosophy of Black feminism.
- **Collaborative Leadership Style:** leadership style prioritizes authentic collaboration, demonstrating explicit intentionality with regard to power-sharing and distribution, toward building trusting relationships internal and external to the organization.
- **Visionary:** in addition to research, uses engagement with communities, partners, members, staff and advocates in the field toward conceptualization of an achievable ideal, and the design/co-design of plans to achieve that ideal.
- **Organizational Strengthening:** Orientation toward reflexive, recursive and iterative evaluation of organizational work, operations, processes, interactions and procedures, to engage all actors in efforts to see the organization, see themselves in the organization, and build the organization needed to implement vision.
- **Fundraising and Financial Management:** Demonstrated success fundraising in relationship-centric ways to build institutional resilience and flexibility. Demonstrated record of sound financial planning, oversight, and accountability.
- **Governance and Accountability:** Knowledge of risk management and legal compliance, including knowing when to involve legal counsel. Experience working with financially complex organizations. Grantmaking experience, traditional or otherwise, is a plus.

# LOCATION & TRAVEL

CJSF is a fully virtual team. Travel needs will be evaluated and determined on an ongoing basis with critical consideration towards staff safety as we continue navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. The CJSF team hopes to resume coming together for in-person team-building and strategy-setting quarterly retreats.

The Executive Director is expected to travel both locally and nationally. Out of area travel by plane and/or train is estimated to be approximately 25-30% depending upon where the Executive Director is based.

# COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

CJSF's Executive Director will be compensated in the range of \$170,000 - \$200,000, commensurate with experience plus a competitive benefits package that includes health coverage, retirement benefits, paid sick leave, vacation and holidays, professional development support, and more. The Executive Director reports to the CJSF Executive Committee.

In alignment with CJSF's commitments to equity & justice, this range reflects an internal commitment to ensuring that the salary of the highest-paid employee will not be more than three times that of any other employee.





# APPLICATION & CANDIDATE REFERRAL INSTRUCTIONS

CJSF is partnering with Roadmap Consulting, LLC to identify candidates to fill the CJSF Executive Director position. Roadmap Consulting, LLC provides capacity-building assistance to organizations within or supporting social justice initiatives and movements.

We invite you to share this position announcement widely or to request a networking call with Roadmap consultants by emailing [nijmied@gmail.com](mailto:nijmied@gmail.com). Phone inquiries are discouraged.

Applications should include the items listed below as a single, combined PDF and emailed to [nijmied@gmail.com](mailto:nijmied@gmail.com): cover letter, resume, and a list of three references that includes names, affiliation, relationship to you, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers. References will not be contacted until the final stage of the search and candidates will be given an opportunity to notify their references in advance.

Selected applicants will be contacted for interviews with CJSF's Leadership Transition Committee on a rolling basis.

# ABOUT US

Communities for Just Schools Fund (CJSF) is a national collaborative that links philanthropy with the power of grassroots organizing to transform schools. CJSF's partner network includes 80 organizations across 22 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Ontario, Canada.

Twitter: @justschools | Instagram: @justschoolsfund

Email: [info@cjsfund.org](mailto:info@cjsfund.org)

## New Venture Fund Careers

CJSF is a project of New Venture Fund (NVF), a 501(c)(3) public charity that incubates new & innovative public-interest projects & grant-making programs. NVF is committed to attracting, developing, and retaining exceptional people, and to creating a work environment that is dynamic, rewarding and enables each of us to realize our potential. NVF's work environment is safe and open to all employees and partners, respecting the full spectrum of race, color, religious creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, political affiliation, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, & all other classifications protected by law in the locality and/or state in which you are working.

This position is Exempt (not eligible for overtime) & may require 40+ hours per week which entitles the employee to be eligible for medical, dental, vision, retirement, and vacation benefits; as well as standard life, disability, and AD&D insurance from New Venture Fund.

New Venture Fund COVID-10 Vaccination Policy: To center the safety and well-being of its employees, Communities for Just Schools Fund requires that any employee who is required to conduct in-person activities for their job must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 within four weeks of their start date. This position may require candidates to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Accommodations may be sought and approved in accordance with the law by contacting human resources at [HR@newventurefund.org](mailto:HR@newventurefund.org). 10