

URBAN JUSTICE CENTER

TIMELINE:

Applications Open:
September 8, 2021

1-hour Webinars:
1 per month

- September 29
- October 22
- November 19

Application Review:
December 2021

Final Announcement:
Mid-February

SOCIAL JUSTICE ACCELERATOR APPLICATION

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

True pioneers often set out with limited resources, no clear path, and no instructions. What they do have is a strong vision, and they move boldly forward -- passionate and dedicated -- to bring their vision to life. The need for such pioneers has never been greater, as the events of 2020 have laid bare many of our society's deepest injustices and inequities.

The Urban Justice Center (UJC) is looking for just such social justice pioneers for the second cohort of our Social Justice Accelerator (SJA). The SJA is designed to shepherd new and early-stage social justice organizations through the challenges of developing a well-functioning and high-impact operation. The Accelerator grows out of UJC's decades-long history of incubating and supporting organizations that stand with marginalized communities, fight for inclusive policies, and push for transformative system-level change. Fueled by this history, the SJA invests in individuals and organizations at the forefront of social change by providing the support and resources to help them develop and scale early-stage social justice initiatives.

Over the course of two years, the SJA provides up to five individuals with programming and resources designed to help them turn their vision for social change into a reality.

What we provide:

- *Fiscal Sponsorship:* UJC will provide fiscal sponsorship for the two years of SJA participation, for initiatives that are not yet separately incorporated and/or do not have their 501c3 status. *Please note: UJC does not provide funding as part of the SJA program.*
- *Back Office Support:* Assistance setting up and maintaining your finance, payroll and benefits systems.
- *Office Space:* Free space to work in UJC's downtown Manhattan office, including access to free printing, faxing, postage, office supplies, and conference rooms.
- *Support Launching & Scaling:* Hands-on coaching and training in core areas of organizational growth: fundraising and finance, strategic planning, board and staff development, and strategic communications.
- *Access To An Extensive Network:* Opportunities to connect with and learn from UJC's extensive network of social entrepreneurs, sector leaders, mentors, advisors, and partners.
- *Community:* Participation in a curated community of founders, leaders and social justice advocates, as well as access to a wider ecosystem of social impact organizations.

Our goal is to bring together a cohort of individuals who are able to innovate and carve a path forward in the face of uncertainty, and who will champion justice and equity even in the face of challenge.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application is an opportunity to highlight the aspects of your idea or initiative that are boundary-pushing, creative, visionary, and/or any other factors that you feel set your initiative apart. Please use this space to demonstrate the clarity of your vision, and the reasons why you are the right person to bring your vision to fruition.

APPLICATIONS SHOULD INCLUDE:

Summary Information

- Project Title and one-page project summary
- Name and Contact information
- Two personal or professional references with names and contact information

Project Description:

Please clearly and succinctly address the following [Up to 3000 words]:

- What is the problem you are trying to solve? Why is this a critical problem to solve?
- What does the world look like when this problem has been solved?
- How will your initiative solve this problem? What approach and/or specific set of strategies will you use to address the problem, and why is this the right approach/strategy?
- Why are you the person/ people to build this initiative, including relevant skills, experience, or personal connection to the problem.
- What does your organization look like in 2 years? How do you expect to use the two years of the SJA program to further your work and strengthen your organizational capacity for after the fellowship ends? Please be as detailed as possible.

Finances & Funding:

- Annual Budget
- Funding already raised, including specific sources and amounts of funding for salary and benefits (*Please note: health, dental and retirement benefits provided by UJC will cost approximately 32% of base salary*)
- Current plans for further funding

Resume:

- A recent copy of your resume

APPLICATION TIMELINE AND SUBMISSION

Applications are due on December 1, 2021.

Finalists will be notified and interviewed in January, and UJC will make final decisions by February 15, 2022.

Please submit all materials and questions to:

SOCIALJUSTICEACCELERATOR@URBANJUSTICE.ORG

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

SJA welcomes a diverse pool of applicants representing a variety of backgrounds, communities, experiences and fields of practice.

We are looking for both individuals and early-stage organizations (under 2-years old) that are based in NYC, although work can be targeted anywhere in the world. As we review applications, we will be reviewing for the following:

1. A clear description of a specific social justice issue or problem being addressed
2. A clear articulation of a vision for change.
3. A clear description of the strategy or work planned/ being used to solve the problem.
4. A budget as well as a demonstrated understanding of the timeline and resources required to launch and establish the initiative.
5. If you do not already have secured funding to support the work, a description of your plans for securing funding necessary to establish the initiative.

Projects do not need to be incorporated but should be prepared to incorporate and apply for their 501(c)3 within 2 years of entering the accelerator.

The UJC will offer guidance and assistance with this process, including matching projects with pro bono legal help.

About The UJC

The UJC is a not-for-profit advocacy organization with a unique platform that combines radical freedom with the necessary support. UJC's community includes projects that must raise their own operating funds, but then have virtually complete freedom to direct their programs – including hiring, methods, goals, and daily management of the work. Our Projects have a long history of making serious impacts on behalf of a wide array of poor and disenfranchised populations. The Social Justice Accelerator is the UJC's most recent initiative.

OPEN CALL ANNOUNCEMENT

Hi _____,

I hope this email finds you well. I'm writing to share the Open Call of the Urban Justice Center's Social Justice Accelerator.

The SJA is designed to shepherd new and early-stage social justice organizations through the challenges of developing a well-functioning operation. The initiative grows out of UJC's decades-long history of incubating and supporting organizations that stand with marginalized communities, fight for inclusive communities, and push for transformative system-level change. Fueled by this history, the SJA invests in individuals and organizations at the forefront of social change by providing the support and resources to help them develop and scale early-stage social justice initiatives.

This open call is our way of getting the word out to the city's newest social justice innovators, leaders and organizations.

The events of the past year have shaken our city - and our society - to the core. They've highlighted the deep fissures and inequities at the core of so many of our systems and structures. The need to invest in new leaders who are fueling system-level transformations of our systems is greater than ever.

That's why we're excited to support the next wave of advocates and social entrepreneurs wrestling with the big challenges facing our society.

Individuals invited into the Accelerator will receive two years of space, back-office support, concrete coaching and training, and resources to help them accelerate the growth of their initiatives.

I would love your help in identifying these systems leaders.

Please share this open call with anyone you know with an exciting, scalable social justice idea or early-stage project! Applications are due by December 1.

Thank you for your help!

OUR HISTORY OF SUCCESS

Rescuing Refugees

Becca Heller launched the International Refugee Assistance Project while still at Yale Law School. Mobilizing direct legal aid, litigation, and systemic advocacy, IRAP serves the world's most persecuted individuals and empowers the next generation of human rights leaders – which is why she brought the Project to UJC when she graduated. IRAP flourished in our office, with Heller receiving a 2018 MacArthur Genius Grant for her work. Today, they have 51 staff members and 3000 volunteers, providing services to refugees in and from more than 70 countries worldwide.

Valuing our Veterans

Coco Culhane was working in our Mental Health Project when she came across a horrifying statistic: 22 veterans commit suicide, on average, every day in this country. After discussing the issue with our Executive Director, Doug Lasdon, Culhane launched The Veteran Advocacy Project, which provides free civil legal services to low-income veterans and their families, with a focus on those living with Post Traumatic Stress, Traumatic Brain Injury, and substance use issues. Thanks to their work, thousands of vets have received critical services and support to help them transition back into civilian life.

Investigating Mass Incarceration

The unparalleled freedom we give our Project leaders is what convinced Bianca Tylek to bring Worth Rises (formerly the Corrections Accountability Project) to UJC, after another fellowship had bogged her efforts down in months of needless paperwork. Worth Rises works to dismantle the prison industrial complex and end the exploitation of those it touches by partnering deliberately with directly impacted people and communities. Before spinning off into an independent organization, they successfully fought to make all phone calls to and from NYC jails free of charge, a model they are now using nationwide.

Assisting Asylum Seekers

Every year, tens of thousands of people fleeing immediate violence cross our borders seeking desperately needed asylum. Many don't speak the language, and have no assistance or money to acquire legal help. Once in our system, they may be sent anywhere in the United States to wait as their case progresses. When four law students from Yale realized the enormity of the problems these families and individuals were facing, they came to the UJC to launch the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project, which provides direct legal assistance, develops innovative communication technologies, monitors detention facilities, and advocates for legislative reform. They are now an independent organization handling over 500 complicated cases yearly.

**“UJC WAS
ESSENTIAL IN
BUILDING THE
INTERNATIONAL
REFUGEE
ASSISTANCE
PROJECT
INTO THE
ORGANIZATION
WE ARE TODAY.”**

Becca Heller
Director, IRAP

SOCIAL JUSTICE ACCELERATOR CLASS OF 2020 PROJECTS

AsylumConnect

Provides the world's first tech resource platform designed for those fleeing persecution due to sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Brave House

Supports young immigrant women in New York City, with a focus on those who are survivors of gender-based violence.

The College Athlete Advocacy Initiative

Advocates for the fair treatment, protection, and representation of college athletes in the multibillion-dollar college sports industry.

Power of Purpose

Is a solution to the violence, crime, and cycle of criminal justice involvement plaguing youth ages 14 to 18 in the Bronx.

Surveillance Technology Oversight Project

Litigates and advocates the dismantling of local and state-level surveillance, particularly those systems targeted at historically over-policed communities.

URBAN JUSTICE CENTER ANCHOR PROJECTS

Domestic Violence Project

Protects the rights of intimate partner violence survivors to allow for a self-determined and safe future.

Human Rights Project

Promotes recognition and implementation of the full spectrum of human rights in the United States.

Mental Health Project

Works to enforce the rights of low-income New Yorkers with mental health concerns.

Peter Cicchino Youth Project

Provides legal representation to homeless youth in NYC, with a focus on the needs of LGBTQ youth.

Safety Net Project

Advocates to ensure access to public benefits for low-income New Yorkers; defends tenants against eviction & provides legal support for tenant organizing campaigns; and supports & organizes with homeless New Yorkers.

Sex Workers Project

Provides legal services, advocacy, education, and organizing for the human rights of sex workers.

Street Vendor Project

Works to correct social and economic injustice faced by NYC street vendors.