



RACIAL DEMOCRACY
CRIME AND JUSTICE
NETWORK

Improving Fairness and Justice in Community Supervision:

Small Grants Program*

Application Deadline: February 15, 2023

Full Applications and Budget Forms should be emailed to rdcjn@umd.edu by the deadline.

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*Funding for this program is provided by Arnold Ventures

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Overview

Award Information

This RDCJN small grants program will fund four research projects of \$100,000 of total costs each over a two-year period beginning on August 1, 2023. Applicants must be members of the Racial Democracy and Crime Network (RDCJN). Funded projects must focus on research to “Improve Fairness and Justice in Community Supervision” as outlined below. The grant is not intended to be a supplement to existing funding.

Background

Public disquiet about skyrocketing mass incarceration often obscures the fact that post-release, roughly 4.5 million people are transferred to community supervision, under a wide range of difficult to meet predetermined conditions. In the United States, probation is the most common sanction resulting from the adjudication of non-violent criminal cases. Furthermore, following jail and prison stays, a sizable number of newly released, impoverished men and women are additionally saddled with hefty fines and fees. Reducing the ever-widening reach of the prison industrial complex is critical given that structural racism permeates many traditional criminal justice policies. The day-to-day challenges of having one’s mundane routines monitored and scrutinized are evinced by the scores of people returned to prison annually. It is worth noting that many of these new admissions do not result from reoffending but stem from technical violations associated with burdensome reporting conditions.

Prison admissions for supervision violations are costly to taxpayers and needlessly expose many low-risk, previously justice involved individuals to additional and enduring harms (e.g., financial, health, housing). There is a pressing need to design community supervision policies and practices that enhance public safety while not worsening enduring racial disparities. A steady stream of research demonstrates that conventional community supervision strategies often fail to produce favorable public safety outcomes while simultaneously exacerbating racial disparities for returning citizens, their loved ones, and their social networks. Heightened public attention concerning how best to reduce racial disparity in criminal justice system processes resoundingly points to an urgent need to develop evidence-driven policies to improve fairness and justice.

We seek to broaden the capacity of the research community and advance racial equity in community supervision by elevating the work of young scholars from underrepresented groups. Individuals who bring diverse lived experiences and a deep appreciation of contemporary problems can help drive transformative solutions to inequalities in community supervision policy and practice. We welcome applications from early career scholars to conduct innovative research on collaborative approaches to reduce racial inequality in community supervision and enhance public safety within historically distressed communities. Grants will be competitively awarded to early career scholars within the Racial Democracy Criminal Justice Network (RDCJN).

Research Interests

This grants' program is focused on achieving greater racial equity in a wide range of community supervision policies and practices (i.e., pre-trial processing, policing, and corrections) to correct systemic failures through evidence-based solutions. It will support projects that are methodologically rigorous, evidence-based, and policy relevant being conducted by scholars who bring fresh perspectives and innovative research designs to bear on a wide range of conventional community supervision problems. Our goal is to facilitate work by emerging scholars whose viewpoints traditionally have been overlooked or discredited as valid starting points, despite their personal and professional investments in improving the lives of those who routinely find themselves on the receiving end of harmful criminal justice policies.

We encourage proposals that bring together scholars, grassroots community organizations, criminal justice agencies, and local policymakers. Collaborative approaches to conducting policy-relevant research are well suited for addressing myriad persistent, social problems, including ingrained racial inequality in criminal justice system processes (i.e., pretrial justice, policing, and corrections). We contend that such collaborations can mobilize the real-world knowledge and experiences of local stakeholders who rarely have a genuine role in co-creating effective, equitable, and respectful public safety strategies for those they serve.

Outcomes/Deliverables

Each project must specify the outcomes/deliverables they will produce. We anticipate a wide range of deliverables stemming from the research. These could include descriptions of approaches that help to shape scalable interventions and solutions, podcasts, blogs, research/policy briefs, white papers, public presentations to local policymakers and community stakeholders, and multi-year grant proposals for continued work. Grantees will also have opportunities to participate in thematic panels at the annual meetings of the American Society of Criminology (ASC) and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) to present their work to wider audiences.

Project Mentoring

Each grantee will have a mentor with considerable research, publication, and grant experience assigned to facilitate the successful execution of the stated research goals. The mentor's role is to be a consultant who facilitates progress by answering questions, discussing problems that might arise, and generally providing advice as needed. Applicants can suggest potential mentors as noted in the application requirements.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be tenure track (but untenured) faculty members who hold a PhD.
- Applicants must be members of the Racial Democracy and Crime Network.
- Priority will be given to applicants at institutions with heavier teaching loads and limited support for research activities.
- Given the total budget limit of each grant, we encourage applications for small-scale, localized projects that build on the awardee's ongoing research agendas.

Reporting & Meeting Requirements

- Grantees and mentors will participate in a kick-off meeting (at an Arnold Venture facility) to present their projects, meet one another, and discuss their mentoring goals.
- Grantees are required to submit brief (1-2 page) quarterly reports to their mentors and Drs. Brunson and Krivo. These reports will describe progress to date and raise questions or concerns for which the grantee wants advice. The reports will also include a description of expenditures to date. Individual follow-up calls/meetings will be scheduled to assist grantees in resolving concerns raised in their reports.
- Grantees and mentors will participate in a final meeting at the end of the two-year funding cycle so that grantees can present findings, receive feedback on study results, and continue to network.
- A final report is due to Drs. Brunson and Krivo on July 28, 2025. (Details of the final report content will be provided by June 2025).

Application Requirements

Submit the full application with the materials for sections A through G described below in a single Word document titled "RDCJN App_LastName_FirstName_2023.docx". Submit the Budget Form (see section F below) as a separate Excel File titled "RDCJN App_LastName_FirstName_2023.xlsx". Email the full application and budget form to rdcjin@umd.edu by February 15, 2023.

A. Project Narrative

Five pages maximum. Format your narrative as follows: 12-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced text with a line space between each paragraph, numbered pages, and 1-inch margins on all sides. Include your reference list with your narrative. The references do not count toward the five-page limit.

The Project Narrative should include the following (note the suggested page limits for these items):

- *State the major research questions or aims guiding the proposal (0.5 page).*
- *Provide a strong rationale that includes (1.5 page):*
 - A brief literature review indicating how the project complements and extends prior and concurrent research including your own ongoing research.
 - Describes the theories that provide the foundation or organizing frame for the research.
 - A discussion of how the project fits with the goals of this request for proposals.
 - A description of the project's relevance for policy or practice.
- *Include specific hypotheses and/or research questions to be tested or addressed (0.5 page).*
- *Describe the methods and data collection plan, including (1 page):*
 - Sample/case definition and selection procedures.
 - Research design.
 - Key constructs, data sources, and procedures for data collection.
 - How you will collaborate with local organizations such as grassroots community organizations, criminal justice agencies, and/or local policymakers (if relevant).
- *Summarize the data analysis plan for addressing the hypotheses and/or research questions (1 page).*
 - Identify the key measures.
 - If you are proposing quantitative analyses, provide convincing evidence that your measures will be valid and reliable, and that you will have adequate power to detect effects.
 - If you are using qualitative data, provide details about coding processes including explaining how they are reliable/rigorous. Also, discuss your plan for establishing that the sample size will be appropriate.
 - If you are proposing to develop or improve measures, discuss how you will show that the measures are valid and reliable.
- *Describe your Outcomes/Deliverables (0.5 pages).*
 - Explain how you will convey your findings to a broader audience, outside and/or within the academy, to maximize its potential to shape scalable interventions.

B. Quarterly Timeline

Provide a timeline specifying the tasks that will be completed in each quarter for planning and conducting your research, completing reporting requirements, and producing outcomes/deliverables. The timeline should be completed using the [Quarterly Timeline Teaching Load & Suggested Mentors](#) Download the form, fill it in, and include it with your full application.

C. Teaching Load

- Describe your teaching load during the funding period using the [Quarterly Timeline Teaching Load & Suggested Mentors](#).

D. Suggested Mentors

- Provide the names of a maximum of three potential mentors (optional) using [Quarterly Timeline Teaching Load & Suggested Mentors](#).

E. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- Include a 1–2-page curriculum vitae for each grantee on the project.
- Be sure to include education and training, peer-reviewed publications, and previous and current grants.
- Do not submit a full curricula vitae.

F. Budget and Budget Narrative

Each grant is limited to a total budget of \$100,000 over a two-year period beginning on August 1, 2023. Funding for this RFP is provided by an Arnold Ventures (AV) grant to the University of Maryland. Per AV policy, institutes of higher education are eligible for an indirect cost rate of 15% TDC (20% TDC for all other entities).

Allowable expenses include salary for research assistants, payments to study participants, costs to cover releases from teaching, travel to research sites, and/or any other direct expenses needed to conduct your research that are not available in your department or university. Funds cannot be used to purchase equipment unless it is essential to conducting the research and the equipment is not available for your use from your department or university.

Awards will be made via subaward from the University of Maryland. They will be made on a cost-reimbursable basis unless otherwise specified or negotiated at the time of award. Awards will be incrementally funded at \$50,000 per year, and the second year of funding is contingent upon satisfactory progress and timely reporting during the first year of the grant.

- *The detailed budget should be completed using this [Budget Form](#). Download the form, fill it in, and submit it along with your full application.*
- *The budget narrative should provide a specific justification for each expense included in the budget. Include this narrative as part of your full application Word document.*

G. Letters of Support from Collaborating Organizations

Include a letter of support from each organization that is collaborating on the research project. Collaborating organizations include those that will provide access to study participants, data/records, research sites, or any other partnership that are a necessary part of the study's design.

Selection Criteria

- (1) Scientific rigor of research design.
- (2) How well the project is aligned with the stated goals of this funding initiative.
- (3) Feasibility of completing the project within the specified timeline.
- (4) Policy prescriptions for reducing inequality related to community supervision.
- (5) Dissemination plan for project outcomes/deliverables.
- (6) Priority will be given to grantees at institutions with heavier teaching loads and limited support for research activities.
- (7) We are especially interested in small-scale, localized projects that build on the awardee's ongoing research agenda.

Review Process

The application review and selection process will be conducted by Drs. Brunson and Krivo along with a panel of RDCJN senior scholars who are leaders in evidence-based, criminal justice policy research. Drs. Brunson and Krivo will make final award decisions after considering the review panel's feedback and recommendations. Final award decisions will be announced on or about June 15, 2023.

Questions

Send all questions via email to: rdcjin@umd.edu