

DECRIMINALIZATION OF MENTAL ILLNESS REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST - SPRING 2022

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Sozosei Foundation was established in 2019 as a philanthropic arm of Otsuka. Our mission is to be a catalyst for ideas that nurture creative solutions for healthier communities. The name Sozosei means “creativity” in Japanese. Our Japanese heritage is manifest in the Foundation’s fundamental values and day-to-day operations. We are guided by a spirit of “Jissho,” or “proof through execution,” as we employ our unique assets and skills to contribute to the well-being of people and communities.

The Foundation’s primary focus is to eliminate the use of jails and prisons for the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. We also engage in disaster relief in places where Otsuka has a presence globally and support efforts to build resilient, healthy, and vibrant communities in six cities within a 50-mile radius of Otsuka’s offices in the United States.

To learn more about the Foundation, please visit www.SozoseiFoundation.org.

INTRODUCTION

Too many individuals receive their first diagnosis of mental illness in jail or prison — a result of stigma, discrimination, systemic racism, as well as the persistent and systematic failure of the U.S. healthcare system to provide affordable, accessible, community-based mental health care. Despite this complex web of factors, the Foundation believes an opportunity exists to make measurable progress to decriminalize mental illness by increasing access to mental health care in communities. We value creativity, experimentation, collaboration, and a dedicated practice of using data and evidence to continuously course correct in order to eliminate the inappropriate use of jails and prisons for diagnosis and treatment.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The Sozosei Foundation is excited to announce a new opportunity for funding to support evidence-based programs and innovative (untested) approaches that will disrupt the current practice of criminalizing mental illness and accelerate access to community-based mental health care.

The Foundation values programs that are grounded in evidence along with those that have the potential to grow the evidence base of what works by enabling data collection, data sharing, and evaluation of evidence-ready interventions. “Evidence-ready” is a spectrum; it indicates an organization’s commitment to curiosity and a strong desire to use scientific rigor to help

determine whether a program is effective and can be expanded to help more people over time. Our goal is to scale what works.

The Foundation will give priority to proposals in the following areas:

- 1) 988 implementation, operations, communications and other activities related to responses to mental health emergencies that increase access to care in communities;
- 2) Scaling efforts to increase access to community-based mental health care so that people with mental illness do not enter the criminal legal system;
- 3) Increasing the number of psychiatrists in the United States, with a focus on psychiatrists from BIPOC communities;
- 4) Supporting education and organizing around enforcing the Mental Health Parity Act and ensuring parity in health plans not covered by the Act itself (*please note that the Foundation does **not** support lobbying or political campaigns*); and
- 5) Arts and communications to increase access to mental health care outside of the criminal legal system.

The Foundation will also consider proposals outside of these categories that are creative and have potentially scalable approaches to decriminalizing mental illness. This includes both tested and untested ideas.

[988 and Other Behavioral Health Emergency Response Implementation Activities to Increase Access to Care](#)

In response to the growing number of suicides and mental health crises in the United States, Congress passed the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020. The law designates 988 as a nationwide crisis hotline number, effective July 2022. Although 988 could be a game changer for the nation's response to mental health emergencies, much depends on the availability of mental health care after the emergency has passed.

The Foundation is interested in supporting organizations and/or coalitions that are currently engaged in 988 and other mental health emergency implementation activities or can “hit the ground running” upon receipt of a grant award. A broad array of activity for this effort will be considered, including but not limited to: planning, advocacy, infrastructure, research, communications, community organizing, peer-to-peer learning for mental health and crisis response administrators, and state task forces. Priority will be given to organizations and/or coalitions that demonstrate how their 988 related activities will increase access to mental health care.

Scaling Efforts to Accelerate Access to Mental Health Care, including Evidence-Based Diversion Practices

The Foundation is interested in scaling programs and practices that are effective in accelerating access to community-based mental health care. Diversion from the criminal legal system alone is not sufficient. The Foundation will consider proposals only if they demonstrate a clear pathway to care outside of the criminal legal system and offer a robust health-based alternative. Applicants seeking funds under this strategy should have a clear plan for how they will collect and analyze data in an effort to contribute to and help expand the current evidence-base of what works, for whom, and why.

Increase the Size of the Mental Health Workforce: Psychiatrists

In order to decriminalize mental illness, it is critical to grow a racially diverse, culturally competent, and strong mental health workforce. We applaud the work of our colleagues who are making sure peer specialists, community health workers and other providers have the training, support, skills and compensation they need to do the work. The Foundation will focus this round of funding on another aspect of these broader workforce development efforts, namely, increasing the number of psychiatrists in the United States, particularly those who are members of BIPOC communities.

This can include: projects or programs to increase the number of people training to be psychiatrists, reforms to medical education; state-based reforms to licensure; or pathways to practice for psychiatrists trained outside of the United States. It also includes reforms to attract more doctors to the profession of psychiatry, for instance increasing reimbursement rates or expanding insurance network coverage. We are interested in all innovative and/or untested ideas, particularly those with the potential for a system-level impact, national relevance, or the potential to scale.

Education and Organizing Around the Enforcement of the Mental Health Parity Act

The Mental Health Parity Act passed in 2008 and was extended by the Affordable Care Act in 2010 to ensure that employers and health insurers provide equal coverage for mental illness and substance use disorder as they do for any other medical condition. It passed without an enforcement mechanism, and accessing mental health care is sadly no easier today than it was the day the bill passed.

It is time to spark a social movement around enforcing the federal parity law across every health plan in the country. And it is time to develop the standards and measures to assure accountability on parity compliance. Proposals under this strategy could focus on coalition development, communications, litigation, advocacy, standards development, voluntary efforts by the health insurance industry, state regulatory support, or public education. *Please note that the Foundation does not provide grants for lobbying activities or political campaigns.*

Arts and Communications

The Foundation believes in the power of art, design, and communications to advance our four strategic pillars outlined in this Request for Statements of Interest. We seek proposals in the arts and communications category that include journalistic and storytelling endeavors (e.g. podcasts, works of non-fiction writing, short and long-form documentaries). They may also

focus on the creation and installation/production of works that fall across one or more media – including, but not limited to visual, musical, theatrical, or comedic art forms. The work may be national in scope or place-based. Please note that the Foundation is focused on reforming the health care system (rather than the criminal legal system) and will prioritize arts and communications that move the needle toward the goal of increasing access to mental health care in communities. We are also eager to explore the impact of arts and communications and priority will be given to applicants who are eager to test the impact of their creative works.

ELIGIBILITY

Interested applicants should be one of the following:

- 501(c)3 non-profit
- Organizations with a 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor
- Coalitions with a lead 501(c)3 organization

The Foundation will not provide grants for political campaigns or lobbying activities.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Eligible organizations can submit a short Statement of Interest through the Foundation's grants portal. The statement should include a brief description of your organization or coalition, its experience (or interest in) working in this area, a description of any current evaluation processes you utilize, and how the work aligns with the priorities set forth above.

The following supporting documents should also be submitted through the Foundation's grants portal.

- IRS determination letter confirming your organization's (or fiscal sponsor's) 501(c)(3) tax status
- Organization's most recent annual budget
- Audited Financial Statements
- Project budget for the program/project for which you are requesting funds (only if not requesting general operating support)

PROJECTED GRANT TERM(S)

September 1, 2022 – October 31, 2023 (one-year grants)

September 1, 2022 – October 31, 2024 (two-year grants)

FUNDING AMOUNT

The number of proposals supported, and total amount of support, will depend on the nature and quality of the proposals received. The Foundation will provide a small number of general operating or project-based grants ranging between \$25,000 - \$300,000 per applicant per year. Grants may be extended up to two years and are eligible for renewal at the end of the grant term at the discretion of The Foundation.

Not all who are invited to apply will receive funding. An application may be declined, partially awarded, fully awarded, or placed on hold for more information.

TIMELINE

April 27, 2022: Requests for statements of interest released.

May 18, 2022: Statements of interest due by 11:59 PM EDT.

June 10, 2022: Invitations sent to submit a full proposal.

July 6, 2022: Full proposals due by 11:59 PM EDT.

By end of August 2022: Sozosei Foundation notifies applicants.

QUESTIONS

Please address all questions regarding this Request for Statements of Interest to:

info@sozosei.org.