

**SOZOSEI SOLUTION FUND
REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST
JUNE 28, 2021**

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Sozosei Foundation is a national foundation established in 2019 as the philanthropic arm of Otsuka America Pharmaceutical, Inc. Sozosei means “creativity” in Japanese, which undergirds all of The Foundation’s work. The current philanthropic focus is the decriminalization of mental illness in the United States with the overarching goal of eliminating the inappropriate use of jails and prisons for mental health diagnosis and treatment.

Against this backdrop The Foundation supports existing evidence-based programs along with innovative new ideas, aiming to help expand the evidence base of what works, for whom, and why as we work toward overarching goal. Through convenings and programming, the Foundation engages in dialogue with stakeholders and supports the programs and practices that have the highest potential to move the needle to decriminalize mental illness in the United States.

For more information, please visit www.sozoseifoundation.org.

INTRODUCTION

Too many individuals receive their first diagnosis of mental illness in jail or prison, an avertable tragedy that is a result of multiple system failures, stigma, discrimination, and systemic racism. Moreover, the services available in jails and prisons are often woefully inadequate to meet the mental healthcare needs of a critical mass of the population and systems fail to meet the healthcare needs of people upon release, resulting in an endless cycle of incarceration for many. Despite this complex web of factors, The Foundation believes an opportunity exists to make measurable progress to decriminalize mental illness by supporting, evaluating, and elevating the most promising programs and practices. To do so demands creativity, experimentation, collaboration, and a dedicated practice of using data and evidence to continuously course correct.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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

The Foundation has a preference for programs that are grounded in evidence or 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; more than anything, it indicates an organization's desire and ability to use scientific rigor to help determine whether a program is effective and can be expanded to help more humans over time.

The Foundation will give priority to proposals in the four areas identified at our May 2021 Global Solution Lab:

- 1) Plan and implement 988, the national mental health crisis hotline going live in July 2022
- 2) Scale evidence-based diversion practices and centers of excellence
- 3) Increase the size of the mental health workforce
- 4) Support education and organizing around the Medicaid Reentry Act, please note that The Foundation does not support lobbying or political campaigns.

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

Finally, The Foundation will consider individual organizations' proposals, but it is also very interested in collaborative proposals that engage multi-disciplinary, cross-sector and/or cross-agency teams.

[Plan and Implement 988, the New National Mental Health Crisis Hotline](#)

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. The creation of 988 represents a tremendous win for mental health advocates, who for years had been sounding the alarm about our country's growing behavioral health crisis, a reality made exponentially worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although 988 could be a game changer for the nation's response to mental health crises, much depends on how it is implemented. The Foundation is interested in supporting organizations and/or coalitions that are currently engaged in 988 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, data collection, communications, community organizing, peer-to-peer learning for mental health and crisis response administrators, and state task forces.

[Scale Evidence-Based Diversion Practices and Centers of Excellence](#)

The Foundation is interested in scaling programs and practices that have already been proven effective and is also interested supporting promising new ideas to divert people with mental illness from the criminal legal system to access mental health care in their community. Diversion alone is not sufficient. The Foundation will consider proposals only if they demonstrate a clear pathway to care outside of the criminal legal system. From prosecutorial reform and judicial education to housing insecurity to healthcare access, the Foundation seeks proposals that tackle one or more ways to meaningfully support individuals being diverted from incarceration to care. In addition, 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. The Foundation is also eager to hear from prospective research partners to support this strategy through research, evaluation, technical assistance, centers of excellence, and more. In particular, research that is coordinated across diversion programs will help the field flourish.

[Increase the Size of the Mental Health Workforce](#)

The ability to access mental healthcare is a fundamental first step in work to decriminalize mental illness. However, mental healthcare eludes many individuals, in part, because they live in "treatment deserts," face insurance barriers, lack culturally competent providers in their communities, and more. In order to decriminalize mental illness, it is critical to grow a racially diverse, culturally competent, and strong mental health workforce. This requires that the mental health workforce, including peer specialists and community health workers, have the training, support, skills and compensation required to do the work. And regulatory barriers, such as those that bar access to telehealth services, need to be adjusted. The Foundation will consider a broad

range of proposals in this area (e.g., policy, advocacy, training, or programs), but it is particularly interested in work that has either a system-level impact, national relevance, or the potential to scale.

[Support Education and Organizing Around the Medicaid Reentry Act](#)

People with mental illness who are incarcerated face enormous challenges to accessing appropriate mental health care upon reentry. One easy solution is to ensure continuity of care from prison to community by ending the cessation of Medicaid reimbursement for services received while an individual is incarcerated. The Medicaid Reentry Act would resume benefits for Medicaid-eligible individuals 30 days before they are released, which would allow providers to reach “behind the wall” of prisons and jails and avoid a gap in coverage upon an individual’s return to the community. This policy change could be particularly helpful for individuals with mental illness who cycle in and out of jails and could lead to increased retention in treatment. Proposals under this strategy could focus on coalition development, communications, and public education. Please note that the Foundation does not provide grants for lobbying activities or political campaigns.

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 to political campaigns or lobbying activities.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Interested organizations must take an [eligibility quiz here](#) and will then be required to submit a short Statement of Interest on The Foundation's grants portal.

The statement should include a brief description of your organization or coalition, its experience (if any) working in this area, a description of any current evaluation processes, and how the work will advance national efforts to decriminalize mental illness that align with the priorities set forth above. Please be sure to include your organization's website and social media channels (if any).

Please also provide:

- IRS determination letter confirming your organization's (or fiscal sponsor's) 501(c)(3) tax status
- IRS Form W-9 Tax Identification Number and Certification
- Organization's most recent annual budget
- Project budget for the program/project for which you are requesting funds

PROJECTED GRANT TERM

November 1, 2021 – October 31, 2022 or January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

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 one-year, general operating grants ranging between \$50,000 - \$200,000 per applicant. Grants may be eligible for renewal for an additional one-year term at the discretion of The Foundation.

Select grant recipients will be invited to present their work in PechaKucha¹ format at the Sozosei Foundation's upcoming second annual summit from December 13-15, 2021 held in Philadelphia, PA.

Not all who are invited to submit an application will receive funding. An application may be declined, partially awarded, fully awarded, or placed on hold for more information. If approved, grantees will be required to sign a grant agreement with The Foundation and comply with all grant requirements.

TIMELINE

June 28, 2021: Requests for statements of interest released.

July 19, 2021: Statements of interest due by 11:59 PM EST.

August 9, 2021: Invitations to submit a full proposal.

September 6, 2021: Full proposals due 11:59 PM EST.

By end of 2021: Sozosei Board selects proposals for funding and notifies applicants.

QUESTIONS

Questions regarding this request for Statements of Interest can be addressed to: info@sozosei.org.

¹ For more information on PechaKuchas please visit: <https://www.pechakucha.com>.