

2022 Spring Grant Making – Reproductive Justice Champions Awards

Assata’s Daughters	2022 Spring Reproductive Justice Champions - New Freedom from Violence	Award: \$17,500
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Project Name: General Operating Support for Assata's Daughters

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:
 Assata’s Daughters (AD) is an abolitionist organization rooted in the Black Radical Tradition to carry on the radical liberatory activism encompassed by Assata Shakur to train up others in the radical political tradition of Black feminism, and to learn how to organize on the ground around the demand for Black liberation, particularly a demand for abolition. AD was founded in 2015, and is led by Black women, femmes, and gender non-conforming people using a Black queer feminist lens and relationship-based tactics to organize young Black people in areas of divested from Chicago who will organize their communities by providing them with a political home that offers political education, organizing training, leadership development, and mutual aid through revolutionary support for the purposes of Disrupting the status quo and Deepening, Escalating, and Sustaining the Black Liberation Movement.

AD’s main objective is to help facilitate young Black people to become advocates and organizers for liberation and contribute to Chicago’s organizing infrastructure. We work with young Black people to identify issues to organize around, learn the history of and policies impacting those issues, mentor them through localized engagement and organizing efforts, and sharpen skills necessary to develop city-wide coalitions and launch grassroots campaigns for transformative change.

We work to: 1) end the criminalization of Black people through the abolition of police and prisons by exposing their harms to young people and community, eliminating their funding, and changing the narrative of our duty to one another; 2) restore and transform communities by providing political education on power and oppression, change the narrative about community and accountability, pushing for the right to housing, health, nourishment, and education; demand, equitable investment in communities, tackle gender-based violence in community, and invest in intergenerational healing and building.

Reproductive justice is a guiding principle in our work and will continue being an unwavering factor we speak volumes to, act upon, learn and share strategies true to the framework for RJ, a framework we are ever evaluating and fighting for because reproductive justice is Black Liberation. Our work, vision, philosophy, and theory of change is rooted in RJ and we learn from Black experts like Sister Song, Black Women for Reproductive Justice, and other collectives of Black girls, youth, women and gender non-confirming folks on all the encompasses RJ like parenthood, contraception, practicing the and building our villages, and having the control and choosing what we do with our bodies, our labor, and how we cultivate, shape, design, structure of our families and communities.

BA NIA Incorporated	2022 Spring Reproductive Justice Champions - New Health	Award: \$15,000
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Project Name: General Operating Support

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

BA NIA is a non-profit grassroots organization located on the South Side of Chicago. Our focus is to educate, encourage, and empower BIPOC women and all birthing people to become informed about their reproductive health throughout the many stages of life. Our vision is to eliminate racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality among women of color. To nurture, support, educate and encourage women of color throughout childbearing age and beyond to make healthy reproductive choices for themselves and their children.

BA NIA Inc. began in the mid 1990s as a learning circle for Black women supporting each other through the journey of motherhood. Through years of study and practice, we began offering support to a wider circle of women throughout their life stages, including: adolescence, childbirth, and menopause. After 30 years of working closely within our own community, we have decided to expand our services to the broader public.

BA NIA provides culturally relevant and holistic pre-and post-natal services to equip BIPOC women and LGBTQIA+ communities to make informed decisions about maternity care, parenting, and reproductive health.

Black Girls Break Bread	2022 Spring Reproductive Justice Champions - New Health	Award: \$15,000
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Project Name: General Operating Support

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

Black Girls Break Bread is a 501c3 non-profit organization that provides social emotional wellness programming for Black women and girls with a focus on improving overall health and wellness and reducing racial disparities. Black Girls Break Bread achieves this mission by aligning and maximizing academic institution physical and programmatic resources, solidifying partnerships between city agencies and nonprofit organizations and mobilizing investments in Black women and girls. Our programming is centered around communing over a meal on academic campuses and within disinvested communities to address emotional health, healthcare access, food insecurity, mental health, intimate partner violence, bullying, dreams and ambitions. In recent years, we have expanded our advocacy work to include that of maternal-child health and mental health, given the disproportionate outcomes and access that has only been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Black Girls Break Bread continues to seeks to establish and enhance a pilot for a collaborative care model between FQHCs, local hospitals, community-based organizations and cross-sector entities and agencies in maternity-care deserts to increase access to maternity-care in underserved communities on Chicago's South Side. In this collaborative care model BGBB would recruit FQHCs, local hospitals, and other community organizations to increase awareness of community health centers, Black healthcare providers for obstetric, gynecological, pediatric and behavioral health care, and strengthen OB Collaboratives with FQHCs and local hospitals for improved care coordination while coordinating with transportation, housing and planning commissioners. Additionally, we know that research proves that health consequences various injustices in Chicago disproportionately affects Black and Brown people. These injustices manifest in increased anxiety-related responses, chronic physical illnesses, and severe mental health disorders. Therefore, the need for mental health services increases among those who experience these injustices while residing in places where they are food insecure and/or encounter issues with food quality. The primary focus of our mission is to advocate and support the health and wellness of our communities. Since the Covid-19 pandemic not only have we provided food and essential goods to those experiencing food insecurity, masks and baby supplies for pregnant and postpartum persons, but we have also been

collaborating with licensed Black women therapists to provide free access to mental health services. This is an initiative that additional funding and support would allow us to continue and expand and specifically provide access to all pregnant, postpartum, birthing persons, and single mothers.

Chicago Volunteer Doulas	2022 Spring Reproductive Justice Champions - New Health	Award: \$15,000
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Project Name: General Operating Support

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

A birth justice organization, Chicago Volunteer Doulas provides comprehensive support for vulnerable communities. We serve pregnant, laboring, and new parents by offering education, labor doula support, basic breastfeeding help, and postpartum support.

CVD contributes to reproductive justice by providing culturally-competent healthcare that recognizes the full range of issues that affect women's lives. With doulas, staff, and leadership who identify as gender-, economically-, and racially diverse, CVD centers those who are justice impacted, BIPOC, Queer, and LGBT.

In 2021 the state of Illinois adopted legislation to allow Medicaid dollars to be used to pay for doulas of Medicaid eligible pregnant people. After being connected by the National Center for Reproductive Health to Ancient Song Doulas, CVD was able to learn about the negative impact that poor implementation of similar legislation in New York, had on doulas and clients. After speaking at a local reproductive justice (RJ) rally, our ED was able to connect with a fellow organizer. Together we brought other Black birthworkers to the table to organize the first Black Birth Justice Forum, in 2019. We leveraged \$200 and community relationships among 5 Black Birthworker organizations/collaborators to provide space, food, and childcare for Black birthworkers to review the proposed legislation and provide feedback and guidance to legislators.

From that gathering we developed a one-pager and hosted a legislative visit. After the visit COVID disrupted our organizing. The Legislation passed as a result of the efforts of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus and rules making began with HFS. When we discovered that some larger organizations were attempting to marginalize our communities needs and feedback in the rules making space we organized a biweekly gathering of the Black Birth Justice Forum. From that we were able to contribute to the Governors Healthcare Policy Roundtable and some legislative calls with Rules-making agencies. While there were routinely approximately 5-10 birthworkers at our biweekly forums, they each represented agencies, so our collective representation was upwards of 100 Black birthworkers in Illinois. We also hosted entities with a national profile in antiracist birth outcome advocacy like irthapp.com- "We provide up-to-date, hyper-local, community-centered feedback loops that center the lived experience to better inform anti-bias and birth equity efforts and serve as a patient-centered accountability and monitoring mechanism." We frequently say that we are a solidarity organization NOT charity, as such we recognize that community voice is essential and we cultivate it and our collective power internally among our doulas and externally in community with fellow doula organizations and companies.

EverThrive Illinois	2022 Spring Reproductive Justice Champions - New Health	Award: \$15,000
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<p>Project Name: General Operating Support for EverThrive IL's Reproductive Justice and Advocacy Work</p> <p>Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds: EverThrive Illinois' mission is to achieve reproductive justice in the health care ecosystem through community-driven partnership, policy action, and systems change. We envision a just and affirming health care ecosystem where individuals, families, and communities can thrive. Our work is rooted in our core values of reproductive justice, anti-racism, centering the most impacted, and transformative action.</p> <p>Activities fall under the following strategic priorities: -Ensuring that pregnant & postpartum people in communities of color receive the high-quality care and services needed to have a safe birth -Ensuring that all individuals have the social, political, and economic rights, resources, and access to receive contraceptive care that maintains their bodily autonomy -Expanding access to high-quality, comprehensive healthcare for all -Increasing vaccine confidence through community-centered education that addresses the root causes of vaccine hesitancy, including systemic racism</p>		

Gyrls In The HOOD Foundation	2022 Spring Reproductive Justice Champions - New Health	Award: \$20,000
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<p>Project Name: General Operating Support</p> <p>Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds: Our mission is to improve reproductive health outcomes amongst adolescent females residing in urban areas considered "hood" and to redefine the negative stereotypes that are placed on gyrls based on their zip code. H.O.O.D is an acronym is Healthy, Optimistic, Outstanding, and Determined.</p> <p>Current programs: H.O.O.D House is our transitional living residence for young ladies experiencing homelessness located on Chicago's South Side.</p> <p>Degrees B4 Diapers is a 3 month course that provides free comprehensive, medically accurate, age appropriate, repro health education to adolescent gyrls in addition to post-secondary guidance. Upon completion gyrls are empowered to make informed and responsible choices about their health and higher learning pursuits</p> <p>The She's So H.O.O.D initiative recognizes/rewards teen gyrls who are excelling despite their circumstances and challenges</p> <p>The H.O.O.D Kit program provides teenage gyrls with the supplies needed to the take care of their hygiene</p>		
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HEART Women & Girls	2022 Spring Primary Cycle - New Applicants – Renewal – Moved to 2022 Spring Reproductive Justice Champions - New Freedom from Violence	Award: \$20,000
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Project Name: HEART to Grow: Repro Justice for Muslims

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

HEART is the only Muslim-led, national advocacy organization that builds power with survivors, communities, and institutions to advance reproductive justice and uproot gendered violence, by establishing access and choice for the most impacted Muslims.

By offering accurate sexual and reproductive health and gendered violence education, advocacy, research, and training, HEART mobilizes people to become agents of change in their own communities and connects them to a network to sustain their empowerment. Our workshops and trainings have reached over 12,000 people across the country, including 20 campuses and 1200 students.

Our vision is ambitious: we're building a world where all Muslims are safe and exercise self determination over their reproductive lives in communities they live, work, and pray. In a time where gendered islamophobia is at its height, and the attacks on reproductive freedom increase across the US and incidences of gendered violence persist in our communities, we are standing firm in our commitment to advance reproductive justice and end gendered violence from a systems level.

We're currently in the process of finalizing our strategic plan that will outline HEART's strategic priorities through 2025 which include:

Mobilizing Muslim communities to end gendered violence at the systems level. Through coalition building, developing resources to inspire our communities into action, and building the capacity of individuals and organizations to be agents of change in their communities, we build power with survivors, communities, and institutions in Muslim communities to establish access and choice for the most impacted Muslims.

Expanding our reach by replicating and scaling our work to connect and engage with more Muslims. For over a decade HEART has provided comprehensive, culturally-sensitive, and faith-inspired sexual health and sexual-violence information and support through interactive in-person and virtual programming, digital education, and direct survivor advocacy. Building on this foundation, we are eager to expand our reach by 1) replicating our programming across the US to reach more Muslims, 2) developing and implementing a strong communications strategy to strengthen our digital education and organizing efforts, 3) and scaling our direct advocacy efforts to provide survivors with the support they need to access critical services and resources in times of crisis.

Deepening broader insitutional capacity by building the capacity of Muslim and non-Muslim leaders and professionals through research and training. We are aiming to build a training pipeline for public health leaders and professionals, and organizational partners who serve Muslims, to equip them with the tools they need to provide trauma informed and faith inspired services to Muslim communities.

Growing with intention through internal capacity-building. HEART has experienced rapid growth in the last five years, and as such we're seeking to establish the necessary systems and tools—such as a multi-year budget— to support the organization in sustaining further growth while remaining fiscally healthy and ensuring that resourcing is available and allocated to our programmatic priorities. Additionally, as an organization led by directly impacted people, we know that an important part of strengthening our organizational health and capacity is building a culture of care internally. We aim to do this by developing pay equity and career advancement policies, expanding staff benefits, and developing our intersectional anti-oppression lens.

Holistic Birth Collective NFP	2022 Spring Reproductive Justice Champions - New Health	Award: \$20,000
Project Name: General Operating Support		

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

Holistic Birth Collective’s work confronts health inequity related to pregnancy, childbirth, and the first year postpartum. HBC is a disruptive force in the “maternal-child health” space that educates, agitates, and organizes to shift the power to maintain health towards communities rather than state-run institutions. We work in solidarity with Illinois’s radical Black birth worker community and commit to amplify their power through administrative advocacy. HBC’s data activism challenges public health departments to move beyond intrusive surveillance of atomized “risk factors” and instead interrogate racist harm and gender-based violence embedded within our healthcare delivery system. We collaborate with partners in the clinical and public health sectors to build the infrastructures necessary to make safe, trauma-informed, dignifying maternity care the norm so that our healthcare system equitably maintains the safety, dignity, and joy of all pregnant and birthing families.

HBC decided to make data activism a core strategy shortly after IDPH released its most recent Maternal Mortality and Morbidity report at the end of April this year. Because of Callen Jaress, COO’s background in statistics, the sociology of knowledge, and the culture of Illinois public health research, several components in IDPH’s analysis design raised red flags for us. She began attending all IDPH meetings relating to maternal health that are not closed to the public (made possible via Zoom!). The content of these meetings confirmed our intuition that public health leadership’s framing of this issue fails to identify the importance of structural change within Illinois’ perinatal healthcare system and in fact misleads members of the healthcare community, the public, and policymakers about what is driving this explicitly racialized maternal health crisis in Illinois.

HBC hopes to disrupt these narratives with culturally and scientifically rigorous health services research that does not rest on anti-Black nor white supremacist assumptions.

Sexpectations Chicago	2022 Spring Reproductive Justice Champions - New Health	Award: \$20,000
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Project Name: General Operating Support

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

Sexpectations is a Black & brown femme-led collective that provides sexual health information, resources, and tools to Black & brown youth in Chicago. Our mission is to empower youth in their journey to become self-advocates for their sexual and reproductive health. We value safety, equity, communication, and most importantly, young people, in our work, as well as teaching and embodying these values from a harm-reduction lens.

We intentionally offer workshops to Black & brown youth because we resemble them and their experiences, and because these groups are disproportionately affected by systemic racism, higher rates of STIs, violence and unintended pregnancies. From our training and personal experiences, we have created workshops that function as safe, sex-positive spaces that encourage healthy dialogue to benefit their relationships and sexual lives. Workshop topics include body development, consent & boundaries, safer sex practices, STIs & stigma, and gender-based violence.

Our workshops were created to provide youth the tools and resources to navigate relationships and sex through discussions about decision-making, consent, and sexuality. Through collective learning, we aim to practice harm reduction and dismantle cis-hetero-patriarchial norms around sex, dating, and identity. And through open and honest dialogue, Sexpectations provides space for participants to examine and unpack societal norms & stigma while exploring possibilities for safer and healthier sex and dating practices. We continue to create additional workshops that cover a myriad of sexual health topics such as gender & sexuality, boundaries, STIs, birth control, and more, all through a reproductive justice, harm reduction lens.

In addition, these workshops are designed to encourage participants to think critically, and build decision-making and communication skills.

In addition to our youth work, we have found a secondary audience of young women, ages 25-35, who believe that their experience with sexual health education while in school was non-inclusive, shaming, fear-based, or nonexistent. Today, they continue to explore their sexuality & are seeking spaces to comfortably ask questions on how to have a healthy, pleasurable sex life.

Due to the pandemic, we have seen sexual health education & resources de-prioritized, although people have not stopped having sex. With the various experiences Sexpectations has had in classrooms & safe spaces, we know that this funding will propel our work and reach youth that deserve the information and tools we can provide.

SisterReach	2022 Spring Reproductive Justice Champions - New Health	Award: \$25,000
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Project Name: General Operating Support

Organization Description and Proposed Use of Funds:

SisterReach, founded October 2011, is a Memphis, TN based, Black woman led, grassroots 501c3 non-profit supporting the reproductive autonomy of women and teens of color, poor and rural women, LGBTQIA+ and gender non-conforming people and their families through the framework of Reproductive Justice. Our mission is to empower women and girls to lead healthy lives, raise healthy families and live in healthy and sustainable communities. We provide comprehensive reproductive and sexual health education to the full family, and advocate on local and state levels for public policies which support the reproductive health and rights of all women and youth. We employ a 4-pronged strategy of education & outreach, policy & advocacy, culture shift, and harm reduction including: community dialogues, voter education, interfaith community engagement strategies, training, direct service, and monetary investment to expand new relationships and build trust among stakeholders and community members.

We believe that without education (community, sexual health, and voter based), access to equitable income, healthcare and social supports, and knowledge about our bodies, Black futures hang in the balance. For ten years we have employed our 4-pronged strategy of education & outreach, policy & advocacy, culture shift, and harm reduction, reaching thousands of Tennesseans, people across the southeast and nationally from people who request our services, expertise and analysis. We work on the local, state, regional and national levels to raise our public profile as a model for how human rights can be accomplished through a reproductive justice lens. Our organization has become a pipeline for change, connecting our base location to other states who depend on Tennessee, or for Tennesseans who depend on other states for access, social support, and safety. Since August 2021, SisterReach has been undergoing an organizational restructuring to prepare for the political climate ahead with Roe v Wade hanging in the balance and the needs of our base exacerbated by COVID-19. That includes expanding our work where there is insufficient or no RJ presence led by Black women. We have identified, MS, AR, KY, AL, MI and IL - Illinois is among those states we have identified as "sanctuary" only 2 1/2 hours from the TN state line. Our plan is to build an advocacy and access pipeline to IL and MI while simultaneously expanding our work in the Midwest. This RFP could not have come at a better time! Our CEO began her RJ work on Chicago's south side with a special emphasis on contraceptive equity and access, abortion access, SRH education - writing a sexual health curriculum for Chicago Public Schools, and interfaith organizing. She brings 18 years' experience to the field, and over 20 years of connection and networks in the Chicagoland area. SisterReach's focuses are inspired and informed by the work she did while employed by Black Women for Reproductive Justice (BWRJ) in Chicago. There has been no other Black-led RJ work in Chicago since BWRJ closed in 2011, the same year she opened SisterReach in Memphis. The same issues that BWRJ advocated for are still present and under capacity to address, in particularly

on the south and west sides of Chicago where there are larger BIPOC residents, but not enough BIPOC advocates to address them in a cultural and movement informed manner. SisterReach intends to build this pipeline for multi-state movement building with Chicago as its 2nd location. Because of her leadership in both states and across this nation, SisterReach is uniquely positioned to broker this movement expansion in Illinois bringing expert-level support to Black women and girls, LGBTQIA+ people and their families. The focus of the RFP is directly aligned with work we have been doing for 10 years in TN, and that our CEO has led for 18 years. Our current work is an adaptable model for IL and the other states SisterReach intends to expand in over the next five years.