

Resource

Potential RJD Funding Streams

For more than a decade, community organizations have been innovating ways to raise money to support community-held restorative justice approaches as an off-ramp to formal system involvement.

Determining the costs of restorative justice interventions is difficult, as every case is different, but the process is generally high intensity if charges are high enough to qualify for system-involvement in the absence of an alternative.

While the costs of incarceration are sky-rocketing (\$250-400k/year/child), it is much harder to identify the costs of probation that range from \$4-32/hour per child—or based on 107 hours of supervision, a total of \$428-\$3,424 per child, in one county in California¹. Another measure of approximate costs is based on the rates for alternative dispute resolution—which will only pay up to 49% of a program’s cost, but that is funded through a court fee.

Depending on the needs of the person harmed and the person who caused harm, the level of severity of the harm, and the underlying needs of a case, sites estimate each case to cost between \$1400-\$4000. Of course, this only counts Restorative Community Conferencing, not any of the other work that is necessary to build healing ecosystems, community knowledge and understanding, training and support for facilitators and system providers, etc.

There are both public and private sources of funding for RJD. There are pros and cons that come with each. For example, public/government funding is often on a reimbursable basis, so programs need to have other cash they can spend upfront before they can seek reimbursement. Private philanthropy can be fickle and only fund new ideas or things that are “en vogue”, or may only give access to organizations “invited” to apply. Public funding often requires subgranting or partnership with system players that leads to power imbalances and private funding may only support one piece of a comprehensive approach. Despite these complications—this can be done! **Blended funding** is the best way to protect against any pitfalls that may happen when state budgets get tight or when a private philanthropy finds another new idea.

¹ <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/jail-fees-pile-up-for-sonoma-county-juvenile-offenders/>



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As is true with all things restorative—fundraising is also about relationships. Making them, nurturing them, and repairing them when necessary. If you don't get a grant, keep that donor on your solicitation list, and add them to your newsletter, invite them into your community. Do what RJ'ers do best and keep strengthening your relationships.

Sites have used a myriad of funding to try and raise \$250,000-\$550,000 to implement RJD in their jurisdictions. They have done so through:

1. **Public Funding:** (Federal, State, County, and Municipal Dollars):

This money comes through tax dollars, government fines/fees, etc. Approximately one-third of state dollars come from federal grants.

- [Victims of Crime Act Dollars](#) (VOCA): Federal Dollars passed through to State/County that support people harmed by crime and violence; Restorative Justice is an approved use for program interventions.
- [Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Act](#) (JJDP A)/Title II State Grant Formula: Federal dollars passed through to the governor appointed State Advisory Group (SAG); restorative approaches are approved funding for diversion programs.

The [Coalition for Juvenile Justice](#) (CJJ) is a resource and technical assistance provider for the SAGs.

- [Juvenile Justice System Reform & Reinvestment Initiative](#): Federal competitive grant fund to invest in alternatives to the legal system that reduce recidivism.
- [Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant \(JAG\)](#): The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program is the primary provider of federal criminal justice funding to states and units of local government. Through this opportunity, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) will award JAG Program funds to eligible units of local government as described in this [FY 2023 JAG Program Local Solicitation](#). Traditionally, these funds heavily support law enforcement activities, but they are not prohibited from reaching more broadly.

The [National Criminal Justice Association](#) (NCJA) is a resource and technical assistance provider for every state JAG and can answer questions about the JAG process.

- County or Municipal Programs: COVID relief funds (American Rescue Plan Act) have helped support restorative justice programs between 2020-2023. ARPA granted state and local governments more than \$350 Billion through the [State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds](#). These

dollars are very flexible and can be used to “Respond to the far-reaching public health and negative economic impacts of the pandemic.”

It is also worth looking into reimbursement eligibility for the alternative dispute resolution or conflict mediation rates in your county. This will not be enough to cover the costs of most restorative processes, but this might be an avenue to explore.

2. Private Philanthropy:

This money comes from wealthy individuals who set up foundations as tax shelters to support non profit organizations to address societal needs not met by the government and/or business.

- National Foundations: Bigger grants are offered by national foundations such as the Ford Foundation, Open Philanthropy, Public Welfare Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Gate Foundation, etc. Often, local programs have to offer services in priority geographic regions, or be testing a new approach or concept with the intent to scale more broadly over time. They often donate based on “invitations only”, offering a competitive grant process to receive funds.
- Statewide and local foundations: while state and local foundations can be smaller dollars, they also tend to give over longer periods of time. Options may include family foundations, United Way dollars, BlueCross Blue Shield Foundations, etc.
- Community Foundations: community foundations are public charities that pool funding from wealthy individuals, families, corporations to support non profit organizations to address community needs. They can include donor-advised funds, giving circles, endowed scholarships, etc.
- Keywords: When looking for grants from private foundations that support restorative justice initiatives you can consider searching for keywords such as:
Youth development, criminal justice reform, transformative/restorative justice, public health, racial justice, community building/organizing, advocacy.

3. Individual/Crowdsourcing:

It is also important to raise money through individuals. This shows belief in your program. There are many ways to raise individual dollars, below are some of the most popular:

- **End of Year Giving:** Between Nov and Dec, send out a letter that summarizes some of the highlights of the year (stories are the best), and how donations will be used in the following year to advance your mission. This should go to your entire database! Make it easy to donate by having a link to your website. As you build your database out, you can also create opportunities for people to be monthly donors, etc.
- **Giving Tuesday:** This is a national event that kicks off fourth quarter donations. Supported by a national platform, you can add your organization to a page and leverage it to raise money. Be sure to ask volunteers or board advisors to promote your page. Use social media for easy links to donate. There are often local “giving” days as well.
- **Events:** Invite the community into RJ. Consider holding circles to share more about RJ in your community. Think of honoring partners who are part of your ecosystem. There are both “friendraisers” and “fundraisers”. Start small, to expand your reach with a “friendraiser”--just sharing your work and what your goals are. You can grow this into small “fundraisers” that might be organized around a specific need “e.g. We are having a House Party to Raise \$5k to Support RJ participants” (an emergency fund to support participation of people in the RJ process).

4. Resources:

- Information on [Community Foundations](#), what they do and how to gain access to their dollars.
- [Chronicle of Philanthropy](#) is an industry news outlet that publishes trends, research and opportunities in philanthropy.
- [Foundation Center](#) (now Candid) is an online search engine to help you search for available grants by issue, geographic region, etc. The foundation center requires a membership, but some city libraries allow you to use their membership to search the directory
- [Federal Dollars](#) can be searched online for free. You can set up a search function that will also allow you to receive notices of relevant funding opportunities.
- [Decolonizing Wealth](#) by Edgar Villanueva is a book, website, and movement grounded in indigenous practices that calls on philanthropy to decolonize their approach to giving in a way that restores belonging, relationships and connection.